ELITIST PUNK RAG ALIENATES GLOBAL AUDIENCE WITH OBSCURE INSIDE JOKE, PROTESTS: "WE'RE NOT ELITIST!"

MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL

WORLD'S MOST AMAZING BAND INTERVIEW INSIDE!

APRIL 2019 $4.99 ISSUE 431

NOSTRADAMUS PREDICTED THE FALL OF MRR 20 YEARS AGO!!

Tim Yo from BEYOND THE GRAVE: "Punk IS dead!"

MRR FOUNDER DERIDES LIVING PUNKS AS "LAZY QUITTERS"

JOEY LIVES!

FAKED DEATH:

SPOTTED TENDING GRAVES AT HARTSDALE PET CEMETERY

EXCLUSIVE: Missing "Fourth Chord" of Punk... FOUND!

Secret Cache of CHORUS PEDALS Unearthed in MRR VAULTS!

Plus! TAPE THIEF CAUGHT GREEN-HANDED!

BY THE WAY, ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

LEBENDEN TOTEN | TERRY | NOT NORMAL TAPES | UBIK | IMPULSO
CHILD'S POSE | WEEDRAT | CENTRAL | CRIME FILM | COMPLETERS
BRAKATUS/SEDITION JAPAN TOUR DIARY | YDINASEETON POHJOLA

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Oakland, CA 94609

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mrr@maximumrocknroll.com

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More information at our website:
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TOP TENS

Some of our contributors' top ten things we've reviewed this month. For review consideration, send two copies of vinyl, or one copy of CD-only or demo releases to PO Box 3852, Oakland, CA 94609. We review independent punk, garage, and hardcore releases—no major labels!

GRACE AMBROSE

LOST SOUNDS – Memphis Is Dead LP
CHRONOPHAGE – LP
MOLAR – Straniero 12"
PHYSIQUE – LP
HEAVY METAL – Too Oz 4 I.T. EP
EXTRAVISION – CS
ANDY HUMAN & THE REPTOIDS – LP
DAGGER – Hexes CS
NIXON EXHIBITIO – CS
SPORTEN ÄR DÖD – LP

PETER AVERY

THEE IRMA & LOUISE – LP
C'EST DOMMAGE – EP
MOLAR – Straniero 12"
STRANGE PASSAGE – LP
RICHARD VAIN – LP
SPORTEN ÄR DÖD – LP
RADON – Moe of Their Lies LP
SPAZZ – CD
PRIVATE SCHOOL – EP
THESE BASTARDS – EP

MATT BADENHOP

NO STATIK – live
SPORTEN ÄR DÖD – LP
DAGGER – CS
BIG HOG/RESOURCE NETWORK – CS
PLAN NINE – EP
VAASKA – EP
GLOBSTERS – LP
LOST SOUNDS – Memphis Is Dead LP
PRIVATE SCHOOL – EP
THE REACTION – East End Rockers EP

HEATHER BLOTTO

RAVI SHAVI – Blackout Deluxe LP
MOLAR – Straniero 12"
CIVIC – Those Who No EP
CATCH AS CATCH CAN – LP
SÆRE GAMLE VILLA – Bedste Ven EP
CHRONIC ANXIETY/DIALER – split LP
DUMB VISION – Modern Things LP
EIN ZWEI DIE/SHAKING HEADS – split EP
GLOBSTERS – Express Everything LP
JACKSON REID BRIGGS & THE HEATERS – It All Comes Down LP

MITCH CARDWELL

CHRONOPHAGE – LP
ANDY HUMAN & THE REPTOIDS – LP
SPORTEN ÄR DÖD – LP
FOOTBALL/WHITE SAVAGE – split LP
TIMMY VULGAR'S GENETIC ARMAGEDDON – LP
HEAVY METAL – Too Oz 4 I.T. EP
THE REACTION – East End Rockers EP
LARS FINBERG – live
VIOLENT CHANGE – live
LOST SOUNDS – Memphis Is Dead LP

ROBERT COLLINS

HOOD RATS – CS
VAASKA – EP
ENDORPHINS LOST – LP
VAIAPRAIA E AS RAINHAS DO BAILE – CS
MALOKIO – CS
DERRUMBANDO DEFENSAS – LP
INNUMERABLE FORMS – live
KIVIRANTA – CS
THESE BASTARDS – EP
PISSCHARGE – LP
SCREAMING FIST – live

JOAN DETORO

PHYSIQUE – LP
WITCHES HAMMER – Mortalas EP
HEAVY METAL – Too Oz 4 I.T. EP
RUT – live
INFEST – live
VAASKA – EP
ETERAZ – live
DAGGER – Hexes CS
VITTNA – CS
MOLAR – Straniero 12"

MIRANDA FISHER

CHRONOPHAGE – LP
SPORTEN ÄR DÖD – LP
HELLO HOORAY – 45
ANDY HUMAN & THE REPTOIDS – LP
LOST SOUNDS – Memphis Is Dead LP
GLOBSTERS – Express Everything LP
THE REACTION – East End Rockers EP
HEAVY METAL – Too Oz 4 I.T. EP
PRIVATE SCHOOL – Lost in Action EP
TIMMY VULGAR'S GENETIC ARMAGEDDON – LP

LAYLA GIBBON

CHRONOPHAGE – LP
SPORTEN ÄR DÖD – LP
ANDY HUMAN & THE REPTOIDS – LP
GLOBSTERS – Express Everything LP
HEAVY METAL – Too Oz 4 I.T. EP
LOST SOUNDS – Memphis Is Dead LP
TIMMY VULGAR'S GENETIC ARMAGEDDON – LP
THE REACTION – East End Rockers EP
PRIVATE SCHOOL – Lost in Action EP
MOLAR – LP

GREG HARVESTER

GLOBSTERS – Express Everything LP
PRISONER – CS
BREEZE – CS
LOST SOUNDS – Memphis Is Dead LP
STICKER SHOCK – CS
PHYSIQUE – LP
HEAVY METAL – Too Oz 4 I.T. EP
CHRONOPHAGE – LP
SPORTEN ÄR DÖD – LP
ETERAZ – live

KENNY KAOS

CURRENTLY IN LONDON SEEKING WISDOM FROM JIMMY PURSEY

CAROLYN KEDDY

FOOTBALL/WHITE SAVAGE – split LP
HEAVY METAL – Too OZ 4 I.T. EP
CIVIC – EP / NO BLUES – 45
REVEREND BEAT-MAN AND IZOBEL GARCIA – CD
GLOBSTERS – Express Everything LP
BRUTAL BIRTHDAY – Commotion EP
APE RITES – LP / MOLAR – 12"
PRIVATE SCHOOL – EP + flexi
THE REACTION – East End Rockers EP
LOST SOUNDS – Memphis Is Dead LP
FATTY CAKES AND THE PUFF PASTRIES/SICK THOUGHTS – live

RAY LUJAN

ARCTIC FLOWERS – LP
BRICHEROS – LP
THE CARVELS NYC – EP
CIVIC – Those Who No EP
THE FLYTRAPS – Kitten With a Whip 45
THEE IRMA AND LOUISE – LP
MOLAR – Straniero 12"
OLDFASHIONED IDEAS – CD
PORCUPINE – 12"
RADON – Moe of Their Lies LP
STRANGE PASSAGE – LP
TALK WRONG – Feral Bearings EP

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MRR has access to some of the lowest international postal rates offered by the USPS. If you have a distro, want to sell *MRR* at shows, or just want to get cheaper copies for friends by buying wholesale, email distro@maximumrocknroll.com for more details.

European distributors should get in touch with Specialist Subject for wholesale in Europe: specialistsubjectrecords.co.uk.

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4050-359 Porto

SERBIA

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info@specialistsubjectrecords.co.uk

Different Kitchen
differentkitchen.bigcartel.com

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Camberwell
London SE5 8SE
malicioustele.com

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X El Cambio Records
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xpedrocarvalhox@gmail.com

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Hardcore Hell
Pasar Santa
Ground Floor 180
Jakarta

PHILIPPINES

Mutilated Noise
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Lebenden Toten, photo by Martin Sorrondeguy

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We will not accept ads from major labels or bands with exclusive distribution through major-owned distros. Info about advertising can be found at maximumrocknroll.com.

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QUESTIONS? MRR@MAXIMUMROCNROLL.COM OR MAXIMUMROCKNROLL.COM/DONATE

LETTERS

Send letters to PO Box 3852, Oakland, CA 94609 USA or to mrr@maximumrocknroll.com. Letters may be edited for length. Response not guaranteed.

Dear *MRR*,

I was very sad to read your announcement about the end of *Maximum Rocknroll* as a monthly print fanzine. I have read *MRR* since the 1980s, and I have always regarded it as the most important international DIY punk publication. During all these decades, I have found literally thousands of bands from all over the world thanks to *MRR*.

Sure, there have been ups and downs (and trials and tribulations) along the way, but who hasn't had those? In any case, *MRR* has been a part of my life for a very, very long time and it will be extremely difficult to get used to the fact that there is not going to be a print version of *MRR* anymore. I will miss it a lot! No more columns that made me feel alternately warm inside and pissed off. No more record reviews which made me check out the bands and find new favorites. No more smudgy ink in my hands. Sigh...

So, thanks for all the years, and for helping me to keep up with what's going on in the world of DIY punk. I'm waiting for what the future will bring for *MRR* now that the print magazine is done.

Now that I still have a chance, I also want to write a few words about something I wanted to write about already three years ago but had been too down to write about. I lost my 5,000+ piece record collection, as well as my zine collection, books, etc.—basically everything—in a fire in January 2016 and had to start my life again from scratch. The only survivors were the clothes in our bedroom closet, so after we got them back from the odor removal place I suddenly had over 100 punk band shirts but not the records by those bands.

Everyone who knows me also knows what an enormous loss all those records being destroyed/damaged was to me. It's definitely not just about of their monetary value (even though it was hell of a lot of euros/dollars/whatever as well, and I have unfortunately learned that most of the records I lost and want to get back cost much, much more now than when I originally bought them), nor even just the music. Those records were a part of my personal history—they carried memories of the time when I heard them for the first time, of people and places connected to them. Important memories. But they were even more than that. Punk culture has always been a crucial part of my life and for me all those records represented the worldwide punk culture, its history and present, its values, this community and its DIY ethics. A philosophy, a way of life. My family, my tribe. There were so many things connected to those records. Words are not enough to explain it all. But I guess everybody who's as much into punk as I am knows exactly what I'm talking about.

People often tend to be cynical about the punk scene, but the amount of help we got from the punk family after the fire was enormous: clothes and toys for our child, clothes and other mundane accessories of human life for us, money, physical help, emotional support, etc. And so many people sent and gave me records to help me build my collection up again, even people I didn't know personally! Three years have passed since all this, but I still remember how it brought tears to my eyes, and I wanted to write about my gratitude towards the DIY punk scene from which I got so much help after the fire. I will never be able to pay it back.

Even though year 2019 is the year that print *MRR* calls it quits, it seems this year will be an excellent punk year. I already have a few releases on my best releases of 2019 thus far list (Physique, Nurse Of War, Ladrona, Mock Execution...) and there are more coming out all the time. When I made my top ten of 2018 list, there seemed to be so many great punk/hardcore releases it was difficult to decide which ones to put on the list and which ones to leave out. You see, I love punk. I really do. Now that I'm 53, it may sound strange to some that I have listened to punk in its various forms since the late 1970s—over 40 years of my life—every year, every week (hell, almost every day) and still haven't gotten tired of it. On the contrary, as my personal history—most of my lifetime—is so heavily intertwined with the history of punk, both as music and as a culture, I feel it gives certain kind of extra depth to my listening experience. It's more than meets the ear—it's in my heart, stuck like a safety pin.

For me punk is not and never will be some fucking nostalgia trip, nor living in the past. It's either here and now or it is dead. These are the options.

Cheers,
Arto Hietikko
Toinen Vaihtoehto zine

P.S. I always wanted to send my year end top ten lists to you like I used to do before the fire, but for some reason I never did it again, so here are my favorite releases of 2018: SIAL – "Binasa" EP / IDIOTA CIVILIZZATO – LP / MORUS – "Ciało Obce" LP / Χωρίς Οίκτο – "Εύκολη λεία" EP / LIFEWRECK – LP / NEGATIV – "Projections" 12" / ABSURDO – "Democràcia Assassina" EP / PHYSIQUE – "Punk Life Is Shit" 12" / Σκοτοδίνη LP / NEURA – "Escapar" EP / EXOTICA – "Musique Exotique #03" EP / LÁI – "Demo" CS / S.H.I.T. – "What Do You Stand For?" LP / OHJUS – "Demo" CS / RAAMATTU – "Demo" CS / CONSTANT MONGREL – "Living in Excellence" LP / WARTHOG – "Corroded" EP / TOZCOS – "Sueños Deceptivos" LP / D7Y – "Demo" CS / ŚMIERĆ – "Godzina Pusta" LP / YDINPERHE – "Älä Tee Mitä Pitää" LP / ANTIDOTO – "Romper España" LP / HARHAT – "Käskyjä Ja

Uhkauksia" EP / NATTERERS – "Head In Threatening Attitude" LP / RUNT – "Positions Of Power" 12" (OK, out already in December 2017, but as it came out so late it could as well be on this year's list, an amazing 12" anyway).

P.P.S. Check out all the great bands coming from Bogotá! Possibly the number one punk city at the moment!

MRR,

I felt I had to write to you about your decision to end printing the mag. I was shocked and pretty upset when reading the news on Twitter when it was announced. "How could you do this to me?" was my first and overriding thought. I've been a long-time reader and admirer of the mag (#47 in April 1987 was the first issue I bought, though I had read a few earlier issues at my friend's house) and felt an almost betrayal that things have ended as they have. But after reading Joan DeToro's heartfelt letter in the latest issue, I can now more understand and sympathize with the decision. Am I gonna miss having the inky hands from a physical copy? Fucking right I am! I've grown up reading the mag, made friends through it, found some amazing music through it, and been pissed off at some of the columns and articles I've read in it. You know what though? It's been a blast and an education at the same time. Oh, and what a thrill to get a great review of my fanzine back in 1991. Whatever happened to Katy Odell?

It was an honor to visit the compound and see the fabled record collection when in SF with my girlfriend a few years ago. Thanks to Grace for allowing me to do that. In my head I was expecting a bunch of punks sitting typing interviews and reviews with others working on the layout like some kind of punk newsroom, only to find a couple of people having a coffee! Once again, Joan's letter explained the reality.

To think *MRR* maintained a monthly printed input into punk for so long is amazing. To think that the mag lasted over twenty years after the death of Tim Yo is incredible. You all did a great job keeping the mag going, from the coordinators to the shitworkers to the contributors. Even though it still hurts to think I'll no longer be waiting for another issue to arrive after May, I look forward to seeing what the future holds for *MRR* and its continuing contribution to the punk world. Long live *Maximum Rocknroll*!

Cheers,
Adam Johnston

Dear *Maximumrocknroll,*

I just wanted to say thanks for being there as a print magazine for so many years. I first discovered punk music in 1988 and *MRR* shortly thereafter. The first Issue I purchased was probably #95 and I was hooked. When I found myself in the US Navy in 1993, I was very conflicted with who I was and what the hell I was doing. While on deployments overseas, I found it very difficult to find *MRR* so I quickly subscribed. Man, I couldn't wait for that manila envelope to show up in my mail slot on the ship; it was like Christmas each time. No matter where I was in the world that envelope found me! Shortly thereafter, *MRR* gained a column called "Punks in the Military", this at least gave people some insight into as what some of us were dealing with and how it was possible to be a Punk and in the military. In hindsight, those 6 years in the service didn't kill me and actually helped me later in life.

Fast forward 25 years, I find myself in a new place with lots of time on my hands (no, not prison) thinking back to those days I had *MRR* in my life. Well, to my surprise I find that it is still alive and well and in print! I quickly subscribed to *MRR* and when the first issue arrived in that same manila envelope I had remembered, I was elated. Then, of course, the news that *MRR* in print form was soon to be a thing of the past. I was at first sad but that quickly changed to amazement that a magazine like *Maximumrocknroll* could have survived as long as it did. This is all do to the dedication of the shitworkers that kept it all afloat. Solid people like Carolyn Keddy who was there when I picked up my first issue and is still there today.

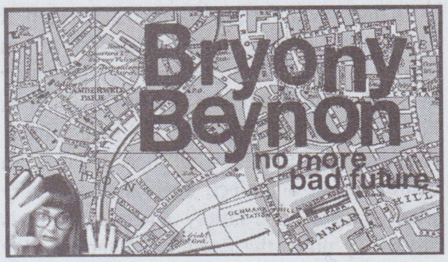
As I read the latest issue I was really touched by the piece on Tom Guido and the Purple Onion. Carolyn's memoirs of her time around Tom and the Onion stirred some memories of my own. During my first two years in the Navy I was fortunate enough to be stationed in Alameda, California, and this gave me a chance to explore the Bay Area punk scene. One day while doing my laundry at the local laundry mat just off base, I couldn't help but chat with the guy next to me wearing the Volcano Suns t-shirt, his name was Scott Derr. It turned out Scott had his own record label, Black Jack Records and was currently in a band called Blank Pile. I quickly became friends with Scott and one day he invited me to see his band Blank Pile at the Purple Onion. I had never been to the Purple Onion but quickly fell in love with it and was amazed that this place was in North Beach. As I recall, that particular show was on Carolyn's Birthday. I was there at the show in my usual fashion, a shy wallflower but during a break in their set, Carolyn offered up a free Blank Pile t-shirt. "Hell yeah," I thought as I dashed to the stage and quickly retrieved my prize. That shirt, in true Punk Rock fashion was a Tree People shirt turned inside out with "Blank Pile" and logo silk screened on the inside. That became my favorite shirt and wore it for about the next ten years until it really needed to be retired.

Thank you, Carolyn. Thank you, Tom. Although I never really met either of you I have some good memories because of you. It's things like this that keep me going at point in my life when I find myself back in the tiny town in Oregon that I so desperately tried to escape in the early 90's. I find myself looking to the past to find motivation for the future. The brightest part of my current situation is I have regained access to the college radio station that helped me explore Punk. The radio station that allowed me to be a DJ at just 17 years old and play punk rock to the other kids out there looking for that certain music that made them feel like they belonged, punk.

Well, at 46 I'm back on the air playing punk. A lot of the old punk LPs and 7" records have disappeared over the years so it is a challenge putting a show together with just vinyl like the old days, but I'm doing my best. If you want to tune in to my show to listen and request some classic punk, you can live stream it Wednesday evening 5–7 and Sunday evening 6–8 at KTEC895.com. Click on the "listen live" and you will get a live feed of my show, *Johnny X-Punk Rock Radio*. I would be thrilled to get some demos of any new bands out there or any old stuff you may want to contribute. You can contact me at Gearhead138@aol.com if you anything you'd like to send.

Thanks again,
John
Somewhere in Oregon

COLUMNS



Ruthless criticism of all that exists! Nothing is immortal and the future is the only real thing! I was not going to eulogise. I called Brace from a busted payphone in the lobby of a hostel in the Mission in 2008 to deliver him some punk post. I apologetically jammed a copy of my zine into the box which he left at the compound and here we are. Printing my full real name and the address of every home I had in a magazine that went out thousands of absolute losers around the world has had its consequences.

Too many people were all too patient with me as I learnt to write past painfully overwrought puns and local vendettas. Intrepid legends wrote to me of ancient lost bands, men asked me personal things about my life that they have read in here at gigs wherever I went. Still do. Incarcerated people sent me their drawings and dreams. The most British thing about me is my abiding distaste for Americans but I met some really real real ones living the compound in 2010 while researching counter-institutions, the psychic profits and spiritual wages of working for free in our time beyond the end of history. Since then the field of vision has widened and shrunk at once.

When it comes to Maximum, opinions are like arseholes; those who claim not to have one are usually full of shit. Just remember that the frustration of seeing something you cherish deviate from your own vision for it is part and parcel of the cherishing! Punk remains a possibility explosion chock full of headless punishers circling the drain tryna grasp something pure, and may it always be so. Impure hooligans hamstrung by our own large, poisoned brains. Might have been at the compound that I first saw the Christ the Album artwork which used that old line about how "the institution is the lengthened shadow of one person." Crass used it in fury, of course, but we can bend it with love. Following the steps of a one communist genius maniac, thousands cast the longest most fucked up silly shadow together, one that sweeps across every inhabited continent on earth, and that when the light is just right, it still looks like a huge, triumphant middle finger.

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I had never heard of Asheville. On the way, we stop at a waterfall where all the rocks, on closer inspection, are jammed full of quartz. Tiny flakes of it cover the ground, reflecting back the weird light through the canopy above us. In some wordless ritual to the obtuse beauty of this odd place, my companions unwrap their taut (taught) bodies and I'm caught off guard by the old but always familiar sensation of my body being squeezed up a hard double-glazed pane of glass through which I cannot pass. It's glass, though, so I'm close to undetectably quarantined, a clear view of how I might otherwise behave.

While they are swimming I smile and take pictures, considering the many other moments where glass has reverted back to sand between my toes. Temporary contingent utopias. I pick up and clean a fleck of quartz and slide it between two debit cards, looking up to see Max's testicles, loose amongst the nature. We walk back to the van past the ruins of the decommissioned quartz mine. In town, when we get there, I immediately recognise the tone a small city of transplant/escapees mildly resentful that they weren't the only ones with that idea. These locals (a relative term, it seems) have tried to insulate themselves against sharing their space with tourists and students through a network of bars with strict local ID laws. Gabe, who studied here, somehow talks his way in. I sneak past and shit in there with ferocious commitment. We tour a synthesizer factor, worker-owned in spite of it all. Hope and invention, bread and circuits.

A couple of days gone. Harrisburg, Mississippi. Our host's housemate reminds me suddenly of the many boys I hung around between the ages of fifteen and twenty-two. Hardcore men with gold chains and shiny sneakers were usually ready with the putdowns, but this was an evolved one who incongruously— yet still perfectly—plays in a band called Eye Jammy that sounds like the Big Boys. He told us about his life with his whole face; ambitions to save up, to teach and help. I want to tell him that I'm so glad he's a person in the world. We park up the van and I see our bands impromptu logo through an open set of doors. The doodle I drew on some scrap paper in Australia a few months before has been blown up, photocopied onto thirty-two sheets of paper and stuck together to paper the walls of Mississippi's only queer youth space; the Spectrum Center. It's a weird face (I have always drawn these faces) with "Hope Is a Prism" written above it, and "No More Prisons" below. The teeth and lips say BB and the Blips.

Someone young (they are all young) approaches me to ask if I have ever heard of Angela Davis. He wants to talk about living militantly in the steps of others. He teaches me about the organising baked into the earth both here (in Hattiesburg, site of one of the first voter registration drives, where the KKK burnt Vernon Dahmer in his home, the crucible of so much besides) and in nearby Jackson, and how it was crushed to dust and by whom. He rails against the compromises he feels have been made by the socialist mayor there, Chokwe Antar Lumumba, and how the staff of the only cooperatively-run business in Jackson still follow his Mom around the store while she's grocery shopping.

We are all thrown into a ring of understanding through shared tendencies much more than the incidental music. Becoming more animated, he moves on to setting up his first DSA meeting, the good first showing of eight or nine, and I think about the coastal eye rollers I know who could use some of his earnestly stringent analysis, about how much better talking to people is than podcasts. In another corner, a mother's chaperoning her girls, who attend the building's youth group, to their first gig here. We drink in each others' wide open accent and I'm charmed at the girls' gawking shyness. Her girls were born just after Katrina. She was pregnant when it hit. "We lost everything, so this place was a new start." I garble an approximation of their hyphenated names during our set.

The assembled crowd is one enormous grin. Everyone's a woman; everyone's dancing, a combo which always makes me want to cry and it crosses my mind that I can potentially channel and then transmit enough of this joy to guard everyone in the room from all future pain and then realise I'm getting (always)

ahead of myself. The gig is a battle royale, set up so the locals—Judy and the Jerks, Soft Spot and Dee Dee Catpiss and the Fuzz Coffins—rotate song by song against the projected clock, and somehow everyone is casually insanely good at every instrument, and it works and thrills us all into fall-apart giggles.

Later, the cops show up. The cops are both young Black women who want to know if the organisers of the show (which ended, per curfew, at 21:58) have any idea who would called it in, because the caller would not leave an address or contact details. Neighbours, it transpires, have been regularly making police reports about the shows at the space. I think about cowardice and try not to look at their guns and feel very British. I tell everyone I have just met that I love them, we take a photograph, and leave.

It's only two hours to New Orleans so we do it straight away, attempting to bottle the euphoria and arrive as the cicadas reach a gritty climax. Our host is Jonah; profound snark-sage, carries himself like someone holding the weight of at least twelve lives so far. He stalks the street as though treasure's imminent and we march single file behind him at 2am towards decorated Halloween front yards, until the heavens open. "Ah, the Fleur de Lis," he snarls from the side of his mouth up at endless flapping flags, "the French swastika."

We don't bother running as it pours, noticing the rain and the air are the same here. Jonah and Mary-lou share a large home with numerous shadows, set back from the road, a wobbly mansion surrounded by rusty protrusions (possibly art, hard to say) mature ferns and heavy palms. The walls are dark, wet wood, they seem to pulsate and glisten as we dry and, socks off, the tiles cool my soles. There's an indoor-outdoor walkway to move you between rooms. These types of exception homes make my spirit sing, parallels to another past, another future, one I used to be able to describe so clearly, inhabiting sometimes, now faded to nearly nothing, loosening focus even more since they criminalised squatting in the UK. They have that overwhelming vibe of people living upon layers of bone-dust, everyday relics of deep lives, of survivors who came slowly back. I muse on this romantic half-thought like a prick then realise that apocalypse is no abstraction. New Orleans is a whole world.

For a while there I'm completely enchanted at the sense of having aesthetically and architecturally escaped America. The long, winding highway over water. I put it together over the first few hours of ears open/mouth shut that in fact there are deeply American reasons for the poverty that covers this place like an oil slick, for the poisonous fentanyl crisis, the stark fact that there are no public schools left here. Curdled slabs of marble jut out at slightly off angles. We climb the walls of St. Roche cemetery with the aid of some lost mourner's plastic chair. Cars slow by. Ain't doing nothing. Ten of us share one improbably long sandwich. I choose now to try my first ever seafood. It is a sort of breaded shrimp.

Later in the evening (a night I've been playing over in my head a lot since) we will play before Special Interest in a Laundromat and their set, twisted and heavy, will end. Then Alli will speak out over the mic, solid stood over the crowd on a washer, about grief. They begin "Are you scared?!" and the crowd, assuming this is some call and response number, gives it back tenfold. No. Rage hails down at the death cult and it feels like a laser pointer red dot right in the centre of the ease with which everything adjusts, shoving even this, a most revolutionary sound, style, and presence into a standardised entertainment module for buzzing youths just …checking out a show, man.

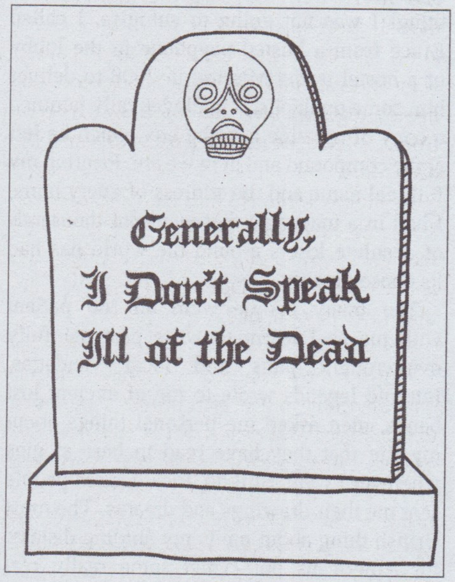
It's gauche to say a moment like that was profoundly moving but what was generated over the space of a few minutes broke a hole in my standards for what our end time gatherings could further aspire to. Far from it, naturally, that they need deliver a sucker punch to the crowd through laying bare one persons' raw loss and grief at their own expense, but still. Stillness. Still space, still reality and still re-connecting the dots. 'I came here, I came here, I came here to dance.' Of course, that. Still.

Memphis (an unbecoming twelve-hour glimpse of it, anyway) was a lowlight, simply. The smoke in the bar itches my lungs and, through various missteps, we disassembled the prior unity of the van, owing to excesses of both beer and pride. This gig, this episode, leaves me wondering what I need to sing these silly songs effectively, be in front of others, what was missing in Memphis, and indeed that it might be okay not to be totally self-contained. Then we are catcalled and kerb crawled during a walk around the block in a suburban street and I feel like the moon is laughing at us.

In St. Louis we play the last Lumpy and the Dumpers gig and I wring out the weight of everything on stage. "If you get in the way of women dancing I will make sure you never have sex again." Then there is A Moment and I am convinced that we—me and this small army of pogoing bitches—have the power to ensure this sticks. "Sweat it out, don't deny me. Fill me, just fill me, I live in my body." Later there will be a fight at the Courtesy Diner (est. 1935, so neither the first nor the last) and my best friend and the one I love will (respectively) sit on and tackle the aggressor just to weigh him down and then the tired waitress will lock the doors and that man, defeated in the car park, will shout out some parting shot: "Trump won, get over it!"

*

There was a moment earlier on this tour where I had cause to source suboxone and fast. Navigating a foreign city on this urgent errand I shut out all rumination (my life challenge) and my engine was filled only with the desire to do the right thing and to help make it stop. It was a lesson in hyper focus seeing how others come through for each other over and over in these protracted crises, harm reduction as both a legacy and a lifetime. A whole culture. A whole world. We are all most alive as an instrument of a project, even and especially when that project is simply to keep our friends alive. Say no to the fetishized interior! May you, too, live.



I refuse to accept that punk is less appealing to kids than it was in previous decades. Gigs are still just as slimy, dark, and angry as they ever were, and I truly believe that teenagers live for dirty, angry, dumb garbage. But, as I've gotten older, the crowd at your average show started looking like the crowd at a Smiths DJ night (which, as a teen, was nearly as unappealing as a high school dance or some adult cocktail party). This is an almost universally accepted demographic shift, and I've heard a lot of people speculate on the reasons. Rather than ask what the reasons might be, I'm here to offer some (probably fruitless) solutions.

1. Book All Ages Shows

This is nothing new, and I'm sure I couldn't say it any better than that raving lunatic from Another State of Mind, So here is his take: "The cramps come through here and they play a bar—21 and over. They ultimately eliminate three quarters of their audience by playing a bar. What the hell are they going to play a bar

for? Who can go see them? Their fans can't fucking go see them. It's bullshit."

2. Free Gigs for everyone under 18

There are a ton of laws that prohibit or restrict child labor here in the USA. The result being that kids are dead broke. Some freshman in high school might want to come to your dumb gig, but he doesn't want to have to beg his mom for the $8 you are charging at the door, on top of begging for a ride. Just make you gig free to everyone under 18. Put that shit on the flyer in big letters—**"Free for kids under 18."** Do this for all your gigs, and try to convince everybody else in town to do the same. It'll work best if all of the DIY shows in your town are known to be free to everyone under 18. High school kids you don't really know that well aren't going to be sitting around trying to figure out what promoter is doing a show. They want to go to all of them, and if it's a well-known fact around town that all punk gigs are free to all kids, they'll know that they can bring any friends that they want and they might even be able to pool their money together after the gig to buy a record from the band, or maybe a pizza to share with each other.

Just take the hit. No kids are coming to your shows now anyway. Sacrifice the $8 dollars in the short term so that the scene can be young and vibrant again. Don't be the selfish dick that fucks this up, ok?

~~3. Free Beer~~

~~Do you know what 16-year-olds want more than anything in life? They want a safe place to drink beer where there isn't any risk of their parents catching them in the act. The trouble is, none of their friends are of age, nobody believes that they are 31-year-old Greg Solarz as their fake ID claims, and little Billy's mom walked in on them the last time they were all drinking the rum they stole from their father's liquor cabinet.~~

~~The good news is that little Billy just saw a flyer outside of his school for, a gig that happened to say "Free Beer" on it. He and little Timmy are going to check it out. And when they get there, the music will be great, sure, but there will also be two 30-racks of Genny Cream Ale open and available for everyone to help themselves. Timmy and Billy are going to get a little tipsy, and come Monday morning, tell all their friends at school about this basement paradise where bands play hard, idiots beat on each other to the music, and the beer flows like wine, regardless of age.~~

*Idea #3 has been redacted because some people are just creeps.

4. Flyer

You know how I used to find out about shows when I was in high school? Well, a quick Google search (though I think I was using Yahoo! at the time) of "buffalo punk shows" returned a forum, buffaloshows, that had a really good calendar of shows for reference. I was able to find it because it was an easily searchable neutral space. Facebook is not that. Sure, keep making your facebook event pages, but know that you aren't going to get little Timmy and his friends out to gigs anytime soon. You have exactly zero mutual friends with any of them and they won't be able to find your shitty facebook event page, even though they desperately want to find out about gigs.

So, if you want little Billy to get out to gigs, you need to make sure he at least finds out about one.

Start flyering. And don't just flyer at other shows. Billy hasn't been to a show yet, so he won't be able to get one of those. And don't just hang flyers up near the bars that you and your buddies go to on Saturdays (and Wednesdays and Thursdays). Billy isn't old enough to go to bars, so he'll never see that. And don't just flyer outside of the local alt-leaning restaurants. Billy and his friends only go to Denny's because that's the only restaurant that is in walking distance of all of their houses.

You need to get your ass up and start flyering all the trees around the area high schools and middle schools. Your city has about 100 schools. Hit them all.

Have your flyers ready at all times, so when you are driving back to you parents' house to do your laundry at 3:30pm on a Friday afternoon and you see some 12-year-old with blue hair and a Dead Kennedys t-shirt that you've never seen before, you can quickly pull over, yell something like, "hey freaker, you like punk? Come to this gig. Bring your idiot friends too."

5. Create a scene that's worth asking your parents for a ride.

Look, I get that you're 29 years old. I get that you are really into Superchunk right now. I get you're trying to focus on your pop project that reflects your diverse influences. I get it. But you know who doesn't get it? 15-year-olds. They want to rage to bands that sound like Jerry's Kids. They're just waiting to have their minds blown by a ripping hardcore band at the first show they go to, because there might not be a second show for them if the first one doesn't blow their mind. And if your new pop project (the one that doesn't even have a drummer yet and plays songs with really intellectual lyrics) is playing, instead of some Neanderthal-ish, booger-eating hardcore band, well, you just lost us all a potential lifer.

So, what can you do? Well, why don't you put your pop project on the backburner for a while? In fact, maybe just table it indefinitely. Focus on a real band. You know, the one you wished you could be in when you were 16 if you and your friends could just learn to play your instruments. You're 29 now, and you can play. Time to start that band that sounds, as you said thirteen years ago, "just like the Faith/Void split, only harder."

6. Give young bands preference

Ok, so maybe you've done everything on this list so far and by some miracle, four 15-year-olds actually start a band (with a really great name like Fart Brigade). Just book them. They want to play a show? Great, book them. It's already booked up? Kick xAcceptxAllxAlliesx off the gig and put the 15-year-olds on it. xAxAxAx are all 42 years old and they suck anyway. I don't care if they are your friends. One of them had a baby. They get the boot so that Fart Brigade can play. Make Fart Brigade feel important. They'll probably flyer to their friends at school. Maybe their friends will be so jealous that the idiots in Fart Brigade are actually playing real shows (and not just the school sponsored pep rally), that they, too, will start bands with equally ill-conceived band names.

7. Record them (for free, jerk).

Kids only learn how to record by watching somebody that knows how to do it. Don't let them flounder with that 4-track they got at guitar center. Don't direct them to some professional studio that will make recording seem lofty and too complex to eventually do on your own. Just bring your 8-track and four mics to their practice space and help them record a demo. I know they can't play to a click. Just help them do the best they can, and have some patience—they're 15.

8. Put out their demo.

I don't care that it sounds like garbage. All the best punk records sound like blown out garbage and were made by 17-year-olds. You'll look back on this as the finest tape you ever put out—the best $100 you ever spent.

And again, they'll learn by watching you. Walk them through the process as you put out their tape. Maybe they'll be able to do the next one on their own.

9. Talk to the kids

If you see a random kid at a show, go out of your way to make them feel welcome. Give them a free copy of your bands 7". Give them a flyer for the next gig with your phone number on the back so that they can call you for a ride if they need one. Maybe offer a ride home. A couple college aged kids used to give me rides to and from shows even though it was out of the way, and that was really encouraging. I felt like I was really welcome, and even though I was 14, I felt like the older guys (Dan and Rita, I really can't thank you enough) wanted me there and had my back. Even though I was almost too awkward to talk to anyone, I could still count on older people to be my buddies and give me rides, and maybe tell me about cool bands to check out.

"Everything is infinite, nothing is eternal"
—Martha

Well. I got The Email today. I couldn't quite believe it until I spent the rest of the day lying in bed and listening to Dork Rock Cork Rod and crying. It's kinda stupid, I guess. Or at least that's how it would seem to most of the world. I spend enough energy trying to tell myself that punk rock matters in a big way. How am I supposed to get other people to understand that? As someone who is just starting to put her life in the hands of this… movement, or whatever you want to call it, it's depressing to see a fantastic and irreplaceable idea that you can hold in your own two hands unable to continue to sustain itself.

This feeling reminds of when I was somewhere around the age of seven, listening to "Do You Remember Rock N Roll Radio?" by The Ramones. I was lying in bed, with the covers pulled over my head, and having a total existential crisis. I didn't know anything about DIY punk, I didn't know that punk bands still existed, and I was still mostly listening to stuff in my dad's CD collection. Although I fell in love with the song because of the awe-inspiring power of the music, the lyrics totally depressed me. If rock'n'roll was on the verge of becoming "just part of the past" all the way back at the end of the '70s (which was about a million years ago for me back then), the it must be really dead in 2010. And if it was dead, then I'd never get to do it. I didn't have a concrete idea of was doing it involved, just that it had to be done and I wanted to be doing it.

For better or worse, MRR shaped a part of who I am. I think it was the first zine I bought myself. I've discovered countless bands by going through every entry in the reviews section and circling the ones that seem like something I would like (yeah, I know I'm a loser). I was asked if I wanted to do this column, and even though I've never done anything remotely like this before, I went for it, because I'd regret it if I didn't. I am grateful that I've gotten to be a small part of almost half-century long history of this magazine, but that doesn't mean I'm going to accept this shitty ending happily. To the board: your magazine taught us how to see through bullshit, how to tell when we're being treated unfairly, and, most importantly, what to do next. Print media will only die if you let it. Punk rock will be dead to you when you're the one trying to fuck over the kids. Things are brewing underground, so keep your eyes and ears open. Long live the open-minded, and long live honest punk rock.

Harm Reduction and Pregnancy

By now we all know that there are only a few months left of physical MRR so I am going to use the last few issues to talk about some things that I've always wanted to address in this column but haven't gotten around to yet. This month, it's harm reduction and pregnancy. In my prior life, I was an abortion counselor, so this issue is really an amalgamation of my true loves. I've talked to plenty of women who are pregnant and who use substances throughout my time on this planet, and I've heard many unsolicited opinions about what these people should do with their bodies. I consider this platform to be conducive to this conversation (monologue) because I don't have to listen to any shithead's opinion and there's no comments section, so I can say whatever I want and just get to assume that everyone agrees with me. I'll miss this.

As far as stigma goes, it can't get much worse than a pregnant woman using drugs. This should go without saying, but if you're pregnant, regardless of whether or not you're using substances, you get to decide what you want to do. You have options. Unfortunately, some of you have a lot less options than others, and that's bullshit but here we are. Below are a few resources about options that I've always found helpful. If all else fails, please email me and I can help you figure out what the laws are in your area.

The first is called Women on Waves. For the past ten years, this organization has sailed to countries where abortion is illegal or inaccessible, picks people up on their boat, takes them out to international waters, and gives them the abortion pill. It's completely legal. They've been to Ireland, Mexico, Guatemala, and Morocco. They also fly abortion drones now, which have successfully delivered early abortion pills to women in Ireland and Poland. It's not the most practical option because chances are they aren't going to be anywhere near you need them, but it's still a genius idea.

If you need help figuring out what you want to do or what's possible for you to do, call Planned Parenthood (1-800-230-PLAN). If you want unbiased referrals, information, or if you need help paying for an abortion, call the National Abortion Federation at 1-800-772-9100 or go the the NNAF website at https://abortionfunds.org/need-abortion/. If you're not sure what you want to do and don't want to talk to anyone, try the Pregnancy Options Workbook. It's a little old, but I think it stands the test of time: https://www.pregnancyoptions.info/pregnant.htm.

Whatever you do, *don't* make the mistake of going to a crisis pregnancy center. These are anti-choice centers run by religious zealots who won't give a shit if you live or die after you're not pregnant anymore. You can often spot them because they offer "free ultrasounds". Here's a pretty good article on how to recognize a crisis pregnancy center: https://womenhelp.org/en/page/939/how-to-spot-a-crisis-pregnancy-center-before-you-walk-in-the-door.

Before I get into tips to help you stay staff during your pregnancy, I want to get something straight. The effects of substance use during pregnancy are way inflated in our society. The stigma is nearly impenetrable, and by demonizing pregnant women we are giving men/the government more authority over our bodies and our lives, so please be conscious of that fact when you call people "crack babies" or when you call moms "junkies" or even just assuming that mothers who use during pregnancy are necessarily parents. It's not as simple as that.

In fact, this overblown fixation on women's' womb's has created a culture where it's acceptable for lawmakers to sentence women to jail for using substances while pregnant. In 2017, a federal court ruled in favor of a Wisconsin woman who sued the state after she was thrown in jail for using methamphetamine while pregnant. Prosecutors used a 1997 state law that says an expectant mother can be held in custody if she demonstrates a lack of self control over substance use which "presents a substantial risk to the health of the unborn child." But in 2017, the US Supreme Court overturned that ruling, and re-authorized the

state of Wisconsin to apply this law.

In 2017, Amnesty International came out with a report which found that in 38 states, women can be charged with "fetal assault", in which the embryo or fetus is considered the victim of a crime. In some instances, the fetus can be granted legal representation, whatever the fuck that means. In 23 of those 28 states, the laws apply from the moment of fertilization. In some states, you can be arrested for giving birth to a child who has been exposed to substances.

So women who are using before they even know they are pregnant are not shielded from prosecution. Before you go and get all judgey like, "how can someone not know they're pregnant?" trust me, it happens all the time. I've talked to hundreds of women from various levels of education, socio-economic statuses, races, ethnicities, dietary habits, marital status, number of prior pregnancies, and even women that were on birth control who didn't discover they were pregnant until it was too late for them to get an abortion in their state. There are many, many valid reasons why women both young and old don't realize they're pregnant until their second or third trimester so just hold your judgement on that one.

The authors of the Amnesty International report state, *"We found stark evidence of discrimination in the implementation of pregnancy criminalization laws, which tend to be disproportionately enforced against low-income women and women of color. These women are often already facing multiple levels of discrimination and do not have the resources to navigate the court system or child protection services. For this reason, women who have historically faced discrimination are at heightened risk of prosecution when they become pregnant. Drug testing is applied selectively, often based on discretionary 'risk' factors such as low income. Some doctors admitted that their decisions about who to test were based on their own biases."* The effects of laws like these are obvious. As with all other laws that punish users, prohibition makes it way less likely that pregnant people are going to seek out appropriate healthcare.

Most women who become pregnant are able to stop using substances. It's safe to say that the overwhelming majority of women want a healthy pregnancy and want to stop using while pregnant. Fear of having to go to prison, no less fear of having to *give birth* in prison is and should be a terrifying prospect to any rational human. Most major medical organizations agree and have denounced laws like these for jeopardizing the health of women, mothers, and newborns.

Joelle Puccio, is a travelling NICU Nurse and a Board Member at both the People's Harm Reduction Alliance & National Perinatal Association. Joelle does a lot of really incredible work around harm reduction and pregnancy. In an interview with the Harm Reduction Coalition, she says:

> *"Illicit drugs are not as bad for babies as we've been led to believe. I'm not saying that every pregnant person should go out and start a habit, in fact I would advise any pregnant person not to use recreationally at all, including caffeine and cannabis. What I am saying is that there is simply no evidence to support the harms that our society blames on perinatal substance use. In scientific research, perinatal substance use is associated with negative outcomes. It is important to note that associations are not a cause and effect relationship…The way our society responds to perinatal substance use is BY FAR more harmful than any substance effects. In order to create useful knowledge and policies about the actual effects of perinatal substance use, we need to radically change the way we treat women and other people who can become pregnant."*

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Here's some things to expect and tips for keeping safe if you find yourself or someone you love using while pregnant.

Prenatal Care

Prenatal care is really important for the health of both you and your pregnancy. Babies born to mothers who don't get early prenatal care are much more likely to have a low-birth weight and are 5x more likely to die than babies born to mothers who received early care. It is important to find a doctor that you trust but I know that's easier said than done. It's especially difficult to know what to expect when in some states and countries you can walk into an ER while pregnant and high and they'll get you on methadone, get you financial support, and provide prenatal treatment that day, meanwhile in other states and countries if you can expect to be arrested.

Drug Screening and Department of Children and Families

US hospitals are mandated to report pregnant patients who show traces of opioids, cocaine, meth or alcohol via a urine test. This doesn't mean the child will necessarily be taken away from the mother, but it does mean a social worker will follow up to evaluate the safety of the situation during pregnancy and after the baby is born. It means that the situation will be evaluated for safety. Usually, social workers advocate to keep women with their babies whenever possible.

Narcan

Narcan is completely safe for people who are not pregnant, but due to ethical issues around conducting research on pregnant women, there are no adequate studies that prove whether or not Narcan could cause harm to a fetus. Theoretically, miscarriage, early birth, or serious withdrawal symptoms in babies may occur if Narcan is given to a person who is pregnant, but again, that has yet to be proven. Keep in mind that if a pregnant person fatally overdoses, the fetus is going with them. If you think that someone is overdosing, it is better for their health if you give them naloxone 100% of the time, regardless of whether or not they may be pregnant.

Hepatitis C and Pregnancy

The risk of passing Hepatitis C (HCV) from parent to child is low, approximately 5%. Babies who do contract HCV perinatally will often clear the virus on their own. Experts think that about 40% of children will fully recover by the age 2 without medical intervention. If needed, a baby may receive HCV treatment if they haven't cleared it on their own after 2 years.

Opioid Use and Pregnancy

Pregnancy changes your body, and may also change the way drugs work in your body. Your metabolism may change and your body will be generating more blood. Drugs may be more or less effective than they were before you were pregnant. No matter the situation, it is always safer for you to smoke, sniff, or booty bump your shit instead of injecting, and that's especially true if you're pregnant.

Despite popular belief, quitting cold turkey is not what's best for your zygote. Withdrawing while pregnant can be *very dangerous* and carries higher risk of miscarriage, preterm birth, and fetal death. It's safer for the fetus if you taper down slowly, preferably with the help of a medical professional, or start substitution therapy.

Buprenorphine and methadone are okay alternatives to opioids and safe to take during pregnancy while under medical supervision. Both Methadone and Buprenorphine can cause Neonatal Opioid Withdrawal (NOW), which is a temporary, treatable, and is not life-threatening condition if you have appropriate medical care. There are ups and downs to both treatments so you and your doctor must decide which is best for you. Methadone requires daily trips to the clinic which can be good because you have constant access to medical care, however, most methadone clinics won't let you bring your kids, so if you are already a mom, you'll need to make sure you have childcare lined up every single day. Transport can get expensive depending on where you are.

Buprenorphine (Suboxone and Subutex) is a pill or sublingual that you can pick up in weekly or monthly increments from a pharmacy, so no need for daily visits. Subs

COLUMNS

also carry the risk of NOW in newborn babies. Buprenorphine is the active ingredient in both Suboxone and Subutex, however, if you are pregnant, your doctor will prescribe you Subutex because it does not contain Narcan in it for the reasons mentioned above.

The best time to switch to methadone or Subutex is in the second trimester. Breastfeeding is safe when you are on opioid replacement therapy, and may help to treat NOW in your infant. It's much less safe to breastfeed while using street drugs because you don't know what you're taking. Be extra aware of your lower tolerance, if you pick up again your overdose risk will be much greater!

Stimulants and Pregnancy

Cocaine (crack or powder), Meth in any form, adderall, ritalin, vyvanse, etc. Again, best to smoke, snort, or booty bump. If you are shooting up and you need to break down any solid substance, you can use citric or ascorbic acid. Don't use lemon juice because it can cause infections. You also may want to use a finer filter than cotton, especially with pills, because if you inject any impurities or any small pieces of the pill you can get a really bad infection. Visit a local syringe exchange and get a wheel filter or a sterifilter.

Sleep is important during pregnancy, so make sure to take it as easy as possible. Try not to go on any long runs and make sure you are eating and drinking water. Stimulants can lessen the flow of blood to the placenta. There is some evidence that cocaine use during pregnancy can cause the placenta to separate from the uterine wall, which can limit oxygen and nutrients from reaching the fetus and can cause heavy bleeding for the pregnant person. Stimulants can cause high blood pressure, one of the leading causes of maternal death around the world. Stims have also been suggested to cause premature rupture of placenta (PPROM) which can cause infection, premature birth and other terrible shit.

Taking too much of a stimulant can cause an overdose. Stimulant overdose may look like heart attack, aneurysm, stroke, or panic attack. Withdrawal is not as risky as withdrawing from opioids or alcohol during pregnancy, physically speaking. However stimulant withdrawal can cause severe depression, agitation, cravings, etc. In terms of replacement therapy, there's not many providers out there who are going to prescribe you anything so your best bet is social support. There is statistical evidence to show that therapy and group therapy can help.

If you're smoking crack, always use some clean chore boy or a screen, and make sure to protect your mouth by using a rubber spark plug cover or some other piece of flexible PVC which you can get at the hardware store. Try to only use your own pipe so you don't contract HCV or any other viruses.

In terms of breastfeeding, you may not produce as much milk as you normally would because stimulants can decrease your ability to produce milk. If you are using stimulants intermittently while pregnant, wait 24 hours after using to breastfeed your baby again. If you are using throughout your pregnancy, talk to a doctor you trust about switching to formula.

Alcohol and pregnancy

Like opioids, alcohol is a central nervous system depressant. WIthdrawal from alcohol during pregnancy or any other time can be *extremely* dangerous. While you may feel like you are dying when withdrawing from opioids, you won't. Alcohol withdrawal is the one and only kind of withdrawal that can kill you. You can always taper down by yourself, but it's much safer if you do it with the help of a physician. Remember to try not to mix alcohol with any other substances.

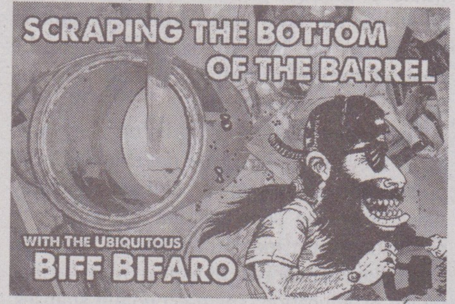
Drinking alcohol during pregnancy increases the chances of miscarriage or stillbirth. can cause Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FADS). Babies born with FADS may have low birth weights, smaller head size, and organ and facial abnormalities. They may also develop learning disabilities and reasoning may be impaired as they grow up.

There are some medications that can help you quit drinking. It's unclear how safe any of these meds are to pregnant people, but they are all thought to be safer than alcohol itself. Antabuse is a drug that is created to treat alcoholism by making you feel like total shit if you drink while on you're taking it. Naltrexone (vivitrol) is used to treat alcohol addiction in addition to opioid addiction, though the benefits are modest. Naltrexone can help treat cravings. It works similarly to antabuse. Basically if you're on either medication and you take a drink, you'll get an instant hangover.

There's a lot of groups that offer support for alcoholism. AA is an obvious one, but there are also other groups that don't use the 12 step model or include any religious aspect. Try checking out a SMART recovery or Moderation Management group. Individual therapy works too.

Breastfeeding while using alcohol is not safe for the baby, since alcohol gets passed through breastmilk. Formula is safer for people who are frequent drinkers, and "pumping and dumping" is safer for moms who drink occasionally. Your body filters alcohol out of milk like it does with blood, so when you no longer feel the effects of alcohol, your milk is safe to give to your baby. I would give it several hours though. The recommendation is to wait 2-4 hours for each drink you have.

You can find more harm reduction tips for pregnancy by visiting the National Advocates for Perinatal Care and Harm Reduction Facebook: facebook.com/groups/AdvocatesPerinatalCareHarmReduction. Thanks to Joelle and the rest of them for providing a lot of the tips you saw in this issue. Keep hydrated and stay safe (but have fun) until next time. Do @me at dearauntiehazel@gmail.com.



Farewell *Maximum Rocknroll*, We Hardly Knew Ye

Hearing the sad news about the changes MRR would soon be going though, I had a very difficult time finding motivation to compile a column for this month. It may seem strange to some to have been affected so heavily by such news, but few things have made as large of an impact on my life as Maximum Rocknroll has. Because of that I thought I would share a couple of short little stories about MRR that I have from my past.

Discovery

For those of you paying attention, which the powers that be would have you believe are not too many since magazines don't sell like they used to, this first little tale will sound familiar as I wrote one of my very first columns about it. I first stumbled upon *Maximum Rocknroll* as a 13 or 14 year old kid. As a bored youth, I mostly spent my time skateboarding, hanging around the arcade and cheap movie theatre at the mall, and recreationally engaging in whatever drugs I could stumble upon, which thankfully wasn't very many. Getting out of school and not ready to go home just yet I dropped a hit of acid and took off on my skateboard. After a few hours out terrorizing the quaint little suburban town, I decided to start riding home. To break up the ride I happened into a book store and was walking around the magazine aisle looking for nothing in particular. Perched on a shelf amongst a number of slicker, more professional looking music magazines my eyes came to rest on the classic black and white newsprint cover that would soon be a monthly staple in my life, the very first copy of *Maximum Rocknroll* I ever laid eyes on. I remember excitedly picking it up and thumbing through it as the cover story, "Are Keyboards Punk?" had caught my eye. I was intrigued, excited, confused, and most of all hooked. I assume that those of us still reading Maximum are an aging crowd and

I don't know how well you, dear reader, remember being a teenager, but I recall that I knew absolutely everything at the time. I'm not sure what has happened to me since, but I certainly used to know everything. Picking up that rag while already knowing everything I was floored to flip from page to page and not recognize most of the bands referenced. I bought that issue and rushed home, reading it from cover to cover, again and again. This was the first inkling that I ever had in my life that the world of punk was a much larger world than I ever could have imagined it being. I believe I picked up a copy every month from that point on.

Happenstance

One of the first times I ever made it all the way from Western New York to Sunny California on tour, we had an amusing experience the night that we had a gig booked in San Francisco. Now, I couldn't tell you where we played or who we played with, but I do remember one thing about that day. Arriving to the city early we drove around looking to find something to eat. This happening prior to the destruction of touring being an adventure with GPS becoming popularized and readily availability, we often would just drive until we found a busy looking strip and try to find something edible. Once we saw somewhere that seemed acceptable we began looking for a place to park our rusted out, half dead van. Up and down side streets for a good five to ten minutes we drove, finding nothing that would accommodate our obnoxiously large, oil leaking machine. As we drove I heard Barb exclaim from the back seat "Hey! Wasn't that Martin from Limp Wrist we just drove past"? Now, one thing you should know about my friend Barb is that she would often suggest that two people looked identical who I swear had absolutely nothing in common. It happened all the damn time. It became something of an ongoing goof between Steve and I. We chuckled to ourselves as we found a parking spot and started walking back towards the busy strip we had originally been looking for. The joke gained some momentum as we walked past a short old Asian man. Steve leaned over to me, feigning being star struck, exclaiming "oh my god, I think that was Jello Biafra!" The two of us howled with laughter as poor Barb grew ever redder with rage. That is, until we passed the point where Barb thought she saw Martin. There he was, it actually was him. That ever sweet, kind man, waiting at the sidewalk to excitedly greet us. None of us had ever met Martin at this point in our young touring lives, so it wasn't as if he had rushed out to meet a friend he saw coming by. Turns out, Martin was at the MRR compound and just so happen to see and hear a big sketchy van of punks drive down the street. Assuming that we were headed to MRR as our destination, he rushed out to meet us and proceeded to give us an extensive tour of the facility. I was floored by how welcoming he was and felt humbled to be walking through the place that made the magazine I had loved for years become a reality.

Wonderment

A few years ago I lived with a good friend of mine named Sheena, who many of you may know of due to her Lemuria fame. As her band gained some notoriety they began touring with more notable bands and made friends with a number of them. One day while I was working I got a text from Sheena making sure that I didn't mind if a band crashed over at our house that night. Surely that was something that never bothered me, seeing as how I often rely on the kindness of others putting me and my idiot friends up while out on the road. When I returned home, Sheena was already asleep but the dudes from the band were still bedding down. I struck up a conversation with them and learned that they were a band I had never heard of called The Wonder Years. Nice enough guys, we chatted for a few minutes then I let them be and retired to my room. Trying to be a bit hospitable, you can never earn too much good tour karma, I woke up at a reasonable time and made a pot of coffee and let them know they were of course welcome to join me in a cup. One of the members of this well known pop-punk band came into the kitchen, poured a hot cup of coffee, and sat down at my kitchen table where the mail sat waiting to be gone through. Reaching out, he plucked the new *MRR* off the top of the mail pile and began to flip through it. "This is cool, is this a zine you do?" the lad asked me. Chuckling, I sarcastically responded positively before realizing that he wasn't kidding. This dude, playing in a traveling band that claim to be some variant of punk, had never even heard of *Maximum Rocknroll*. I explained to him what *MRR* was and gave him a little rundown about its importance. I also expressed to him how insane it was that he thought even for a second that over 300 issues of a zine that size could have been compiled and released by a single person such as myself out of a tiny little home in Buffalo, NY.

What originally started as me wanting to share a few little anecdotal stories about the rag you hold in your hands now has me thinking a bit more. If that somewhat successful, out of touch doofus thought it were possible for a zine of this caliber to be run by a single individual out of their house in Buffalo, NY then I would like to officially put myself out there to do just that. Hell, maybe he is right!

However, being that this is the April issue and all I think I shall end by making my theory on this whole debacle known. I believe that we've all been duped by those in charge and that the board of directors over at MRR just played the biggest April Fools prank on all of us by making us think that this print zine we love so well will soon be no more. Well done, everyone. You got people talking and feeling nostalgic. Now it's time to tell the masses that it was all a gag and that we will be picking up this magazine for years to come.

If, however, I do end up being wrong about this, it has been an absolute honor to regularly contribute to something that has helped shape my life as much as this magazine has.

—Biff Bifaro

i don't think that i need to sit here with you fucking dildos any more

by Imogen Binnie

Autobiography of a Trans Punk in 2000 Words

1985 or 1986. I learn about shame through *Jem and the Holograms*, a cartoon about an all woman band led by a singer with pink hair. Ostensibly a boy, I know I'm not supposed to want to watch this, so I have vague and sporadic memories of being completely enraptured by the colors and the outfit and the keytars and stuff, but only when nobody else was around, which was almost never. Vague and sporadic, of course, because a bad memory is a powerful coping skill for dealing with ongoing trauma, and at age six or seven, wanting something that feels so *big* while fully understanding and believing that you shouldn't want it, without skills to parse or resist that contradiction - not just in the context of a goofy cartoon designed to sell knock off Barbies, you understand, Jem and the Holograms are the tip of this iceberg—functions as ongoing trauma. In other words, you don't have to know the word "trans" for it to fuck you up.

1988. I have a babysitter named Denise. She's babysitting the night I have to make covers out of brown paper bags for my third grade textbooks. Across one book cover she writes all the cool bands she's into, the best ones in a different color than the others. I feel cool for knowing about bands. Knowing stuff about bands doesn't make you cool, though. It doesn't make you anything. Poison seed: planted.

1993. I'm book smart so it doesn't blow anybody's mind when I qualify for the Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth nerd camp program early in middle school, but it's hard to commit to anything when you can't commit to a self, so I half-ass pretty much everything

and it takes a couple years till I decide to go, summer after freshman year of high school. It's a three week program in Creative Writing or English or The Essay or something at Franklin & Marshall in Pennsylvania. I get in with the nerd camp cool kids and have my first girlfriend. There's also this kid, Jason, and I have a crush on him, but, still not having committed to a self, I don't really know how to do anything unexpected, so I don't recognize it as a crush. He's from Long Island and sometimes he wears the old Bouncing Souls shirt with the poster from *Pretty In Pink* except it says "Bouncing Souls" instead of "Pretty In Pink." He knows all about punk stuff and makes me a list of all the bands I should check out, with the ones that play in New Jersey (where I live) a lot in a different color. This is before the internet. You can't look stuff up on YouTube so mostly I just get into the Bouncing Souls. I'll go on to see them a bunch of times every year for the next, like, decade and a half.

1994. The thing about CTY (Center for Touching Yourself) is that one of its underlying missions is a social experiment: what if you take away the normal kids and leave the smart kids to develop socially, free from their natural predators, normal kids? Rad shit, is what. My second year at nerd camp I have a relationship with this girl Jenny as well as that kid Jason. Years and years later I'll realize it was my first queer poly relationship. I'm 15.

1996. I start to run with a crew: Jen wears leopard prints and takes drugs, Jay wears bondage pants, Nick wears a Kangol and goes to the Warped Tour. Actually they all take drugs. Actually, we all take drugs. I'm in love with Jen. She has a redneck boyfriend. We play Gorilla Biscuits songs in their basement.

1997. I DI with Jen in her dorm room at Montclair. I still don't really have a self. It doesn't go well.

1997-2001. I go to college. I spend four of my five college years in a relationship.

A couple months ago, in 2019, I was in the grocery store looking for arugula. There was no arugula, so I took a picture of the whole fucking produce department on my phone in case I needed to prove to my current partner that there was no arugula. There was literally no chance that she would ask for this proof. It was all left over guilt and shame from that college relationship that I still carry around with me twenty years later.

Anyway, I'm in college. That girlfriend goes to another school and I'm pretty sure she cheats on me, but also, I'm not even really a person, so it's not like I'm holding up my end of the relationship. One time we climb a fence to explore a construction site, then when we leave, she tears her jeans and punches me in the head. There might be other times she hit me. I don't remember. We only see each other on weekends, so I stay up till sunrise pretty much every day of the week, half-assing classes (is there a clearer image representing "privileged and unaware" than going to college, half-assing it, and graduating with a C average), reading trans people's blogs, obsessing over indefensible trans erotica, and generally doing everything I can to figure out that I'm trans—without any real awareness that that's what I'm doing.

1999 is not 2019. There is not a lot of good information.

2001. We break up. Soon after, I admit to myself that I'm trans. It's less like a bolt from the sky and more like a calmness slipping in underneath my anxiety, pieces fitting together: ohhh, I'm probably the kind of person who needs to transition to be a person.

2001-2004. A new relationship comes with endorphins, but trying to figure out how to transition does not, so I stumble into a new three year relationship as a fucking person-shaped hole. I think this is around when I start reading MRR. Theoretically I've been aligning myself politically with punk stuff since I was a teenager, but in practice I'm really just a shitty indie rock asshole. Like, in my heart, I'm a mess of anxiety and shame around my re-closeted *gender stuff*, but in Marxist materialist terms—where the rubber hits the road—I'm literally not doing anything punk. Ever. I spend all my free time in the apartment making abrasive electronic music on pirated programs that take like nine CD-Rs to install. Because it sucks to be in a relationship with someone who doesn't do anything except dissociate and make abrasive electronic music, my girlfriend breaks up with me and moves out. Soon I start going to trans support groups at the Gay Center.

2004-2007. I bounce around rooms and apartments in New York, working at the Strand, which does not pay enough to live in New York. Evan Kennedy, who will go on to be a notable poet, invites me to be in a band he's starting, I think because he has a crush on me. I play bass and I also play referee between him and the other main songwriter, a straight guy. They basically hate each other. How's that for a dumb metaphor for where I was at in my life.

I guess one punk thing I did at this time was, every time we're working on a song, I say "I think we should play it faster." Except one time I say, "What if we play it super slow?"

We play shows then eventually that band breaks up. Soon I join another band, an incompetent goth/scene band that does an AFI cover. I come out to the rest of the band—and to everybody else in my life—and then use that band as an excuse to wear thrift store prom dresses onstage. For a while I wear a lot of fake blood on my face when we play, too, although eventually I think through the difference between being a dude onstage with fake blood on his face and being a woman onstage with fake blood on her face and quit it.

2006. I meet the partner I'll be with for thirteen years (and counting!) at Camp Trans while I'm on mushrooms. She invites me back to her tent "to play dress up."

2007-2010. She and I move to Oakland. I put an ad on craigslist and start a band with Sonya and Alicia, stoners who have been a couple since forever. Sonya is an incredible drummer, Alicia is a terrible bassist. I sing. I'm a terrible singer but I have pink hair and it's an all woman band. I also write the first few drafts of a novel. I continue to align myself with punk stuff but even though I'm in the bay I don't really get involved with MRR except for, like, hanging out with Emma and Francesca a few times. I work really hard at building community among trans women. Practically speaking, though, I am still full of shit and don't know anything.

2011. We move to Portland Maine. I have a couple shitty experiences with trans guys and realize that I don't just automatically trust *the queer community*. I frame it as a breakup: I know I'll see *the community* around at shows and stuff, but I just don't trust it the way I did when we first got together. An important thing: I realize that I'd just sort of expected queer communities to be waiting for me, automatically and unproblematically, when I came out, but why the fuck did I feel entitled to being supported and protected by a community that I had no hand in creating? Brutal but liberating. The moment when you realize that you're going to need to roll up your sleeves and do this shit yourself—whatever this shit is—is the generally the moment you become accountable in a concrete way, and also the moment you become free to live your life and do your shit. That's what this punk shit is. Until then, I'd sort of been waiting until somehow I became a rock star and never had to work again; suddenly I realized all the rest of the things were work, so I might as well learn to appreciate that work.

I was in my fucking thirties. Trauma arrests development and not being able to be trans, when you're trans, is fucking trauma. This is when I start to move through it and become an adult.

Also, at a going away party for a friend, Emily, Lee and I decide to start Correspondences. I've been playing guitar and I'm stoked to get back to bass; Emily is great at cello, like literally studied it in school; Lee has been stoked to play drums, and has a kit, but doesn't have a lot of experience. No prob: let's play doom metal so she can play it super slow. It's the best band I've ever been in and also the most fun. We go on tour. I bring my dog. Playing basements, touring with friends, meeting people doing this stuff in their own houses - photographers, artists, musicians, queer and trans people, stoners, weirdos - this is when I finally stop effectively being an indie rock piece of shit and actually start to understand what this punk shit really

is. It's work. Like a lot of things, until you're there, you just don't know what it's like. This is what I figured out: punk is not a thing you align yourself with or believe in, it's a thing you do.

Or don't.

Hey you: start a band.

I also start a column for *MRR*. You can basically watch me become a person over the course of that column's six years.

2013. That novel I wrote finally comes out. People like it. It's humbling. I tour on it for a year. It opens a bunch of doors. I start on a second novel. It's not done yet but I'm a bunch of drafts deep. Among other things, it's about the inarguable fact that Kurt Cobain was trans.

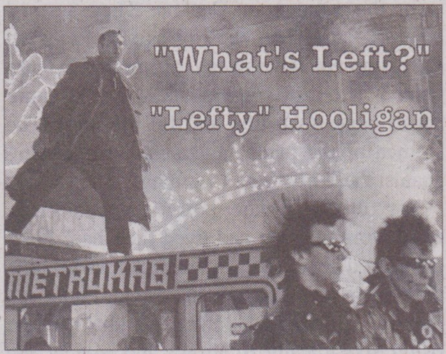
2015. I see the *Jem and the Holograms* live action reboot movie in the theater on the only weekend it is actually in theaters. I see it with somebody I'd been dating for four years (who I'm still dating in 2019) and a couple trans friends in Olympia. Every film critic is wrong. It's incredible.

2018. We have a kid. I am not on mushrooms. I stop being able to even get a monthly column together.

2019. *MRR* is ending? Weak.

ENDNOTE

1. The Thou/Ragana split on An/Out was AOTY 2018.



"Hegel remarks somewhere that all great world-historic facts and personages appear, so to speak, twice. He forgot to add: the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce."
—Karl Marx
The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, 1852

"There's no Left left."
riffing on Gertrude Stein

Does history repeat? Are we living through a rerun of the interwar period (1918-1939) with a repeat of the wealth-crazed Roaring Twenties, the dark rise of Fascism, the growing international crisis, and the imminent threat to progressive politics if not all of civilization as we know it? Karl Marx was using the debacle of Louis Bonaparte rhetorically to elicit historical comparisons, bitterly mocking the political situation of his time after the dismal defeat of the 1848 revolutionary wave. Dialectics kept him from falling into the aphoristic thinking of liberal historiography *a la* Santayana. In reviewing the current state of affairs, I'm tempted to sidestep Marx's biting humor to acknowledge that history often happens first as tragedy and second as even greater tragedy.

"There are a thousand differences between what happened in Spain in 1936 and what is happening in Rojava, the three largely Kurdish provinces of northern Syria, today." So wrote anthropologist and anarchist David Graeber in a 10-8-14 *Guardian* opinion piece in fleshing out the general parallels so far sited between the two time periods. Besides noting the striking similarities between libertarian socialist politics in liberated territories then and now and alluding to the resemblance between the International Brigades of 1936 and the International Freedom Battalion today, Graeber concludes: "If there is a parallel today to Franco's superficially devout, murderous Falangists, who would it be but Isis?" In further praising the "remarkable democratic experiment" being conducted by the Kurds in the Democratic Federation of Northern Syria, otherwise known as Rojava, he reformulates the fascist enemy in a 2-23-18 *Guardian* opinion piece: *"Today, this democratic experiment is the object of an entirely unprovoked attack by Islamist militias including Isis and al-Qaida veterans, and members of Turkish death squads such as the notorious Grey Wolves, backed by the Turkish army's tanks, F16 fighters, and helicopter gunships.* [...] *The religious extremists who surround the current Turkish government know perfectly well that Rojava doesn't threaten them militarily. It threatens them by providing an alternative vision of what life in the region could be like."*

I'll discuss the parallels and distinctions between libertarian socialist politics then and now in a future column. The international situation and disposition of forces today are radically different from what they were in 1936. Liberal parliamentary democracy seemed to be on the ropes back in the interwar period, steadily losing ground to Fascism on the Right and Communism on the Left. Modern decolonization movements in the form of socialist struggles for national liberation hadn't yet begun. The Soviet Union was touted as a revolutionary socialist society positioning itself as humanity's bright utopian future around which progressives, social democrats and even anarchists rallied, confirming a world in which "[b]*ourgeois* society stands at the crossroads, either transition to Socialism or regression into Barbarism" according to Rosa Luxemburg. Today there is no "socialist world" and "real existing socialism" is confined to a handful of Soviet-style relic states. A decolonized Third World continues to fragment. Social democracy and progressive politics generally are losing ground to rightwing populism in liberal parliamentary democracies, part of the rightward trend worldwide toward conservatism, traditionalism, authoritarianism, religious fundamentalism, fascism, neo-nazi totalitarianism, etc. There is no "transition to Socialism," merely the threat from various forms of Barbarism.

The centuries-long legacy of European imperialism and subsequent Third World decolonization left the Kurds and their national aspirations stateless, divided between four artificially constructed Middle Eastern nation-states and among a dozen surrounding ethnic/religious communities. With the Cold War overlay and global contention between the Soviet bloc and the "Free World," the Kurds had a brief few decades when they sought to choose between socialism or barbarism instead of competing imperialisms. Virtually every Kurdish political formation claimed to be socialist at minimum or Marxist-Leninist in full, with several dozen conflicting Kurdish political parties divided territorially, ideologically, and by tribe/clan, thus generating a highly fractious nationalist politics. I don't have the space to discuss this complexity other than to note that when Soviet-style Communism collapsed internationally between 1989 and 1991, the US was left the victor and sole superpower. The Kurds reoriented themselves to seeking alliances with and aid from the US, which has repeatedly proven to be a mistake.

The US has blatantly used the Kurds and their nationalist ambitions for short-term American imperialist gain time and again, betraying them without a second thought whenever it was convenient. Through the CIA, the Nixon Administration fomented a Kurdish rebellion in northern Iraq against Saddam Hussein as a favor to the shah of Iran in 1975 which Henry Kissinger then betrayed. In 1991, George H.W. Bush personally encouraged the southern Shia and northern Kurds of Iraq to revolt against Saddam Hussein, only to balk at militarily aiding those rebellions, leaving the Shiite and Kurdish insurgents to be brutally crushed by the Ba'athist dictatorship. Kurdish autonomy and the Kurdistan Regional Government that emerged thereafter were more honored in the breach than the observance by the US, establishing a *de facto* Kurdish independence after the 2003 invasion of Iraq. That autonomy was compromised after the US withdrawal from Iraq in 2011 as the central Iraqi government, backed by Iran, rolled back agreements on power sharing, oil

production, and territorial control with the Kurds. The 2011 collapse of Syria into civil war, and the subsequent rise of IS with its 2014 Northern Iraq offensive were followed by the battles for Kirkuk and Mosul, the consolidation of Kurdish power in northern Syria, and the Kurdish defeat of IS in both Iraq and Syria. The US aided this Kurdish military resurgence, but now Trump and the US threaten to betray America's Kurdish allies once again by a precipitous withdrawal of troops from Syria.

The Kurds see the US as the political and military guarantor of Kurdish autonomy in northern Iraq, and now in northern Syria, where Rojava is carrying out a profound libertarian socialist experiment in self-government. But the US is a notoriously unreliable partner, first and foremost because America always pursues its own imperialist interests in the region. Second, the US consistently promotes the interests of regional client states like Israel and Egypt and regional allies like Saudi Arabia and Turkey. The US being the principal imperialist power remaining in the world means that support for the Kurds and Rojava is a complicated affair, especially for the left of the Left.

"Syria In Brief" is an internet project [syriainbrief.wordpress.com/2016/08/19/leftist-groups-on-the-syrian-civil-war/] which summarizes the position of some fifty-four western Leftist groups, all of which "support secularism and socialism […] and oppose intervention by Western powers, but their attitudes towards the Assad regime, the Kurdish PYD/YPG-led Rojava, the vast and multi-colored 'opposition," Russian intervention, "and the so-called Islamic State vary greatly." For the anti-imperialist Leninist Left disparagingly called "Tankies," those politics are rigid, vulgar and formulaic. Imperialism is categorically bad and US imperialism is particularly bad, so the Butcher of Damascus Assad and his Russian allies are to be supported at all costs. Thus Tankie anti-imperialism means defending the client Syrian state of the former "real existing socialist" state of Russia without fail. By contrast, virtually all of the left communist and left anarchist groups listed—as well as assorted independent Leninists, Trotskyists and Maoists—support the Democratic Federation of Northern Syria/Rojava, the PYD/YPG/SDF, and their libertarian socialist experiment on the ground. Many also critically or partially support the Free Syrian Army in particular and the Syrian opposition generally.

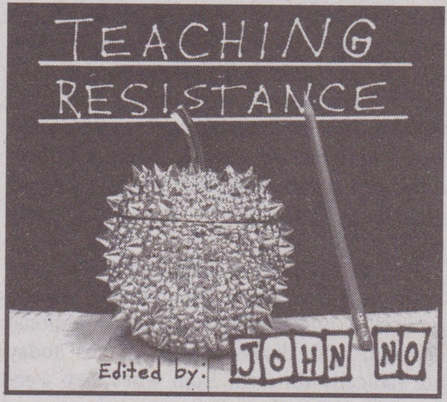
But how to square the circle and support the Kurds without endorsing US imperialism? The short answer is that it can't be done. An open letter in the New York Review of Books from the Emergency Committee for Rojava on 4-23-18 called for the defense of Rojava by demanding the US government:

- *impose economic and political sanctions on Turkey's leadership;*
- *embargo sales and delivery of weapons from NATO countries to Turkey;*
- *insist upon Rojava's representation in Syrian peace negotiations;*
- *continue military support for the SDF.*

David Graeber signed the letter, along with Noam Chomsky, Debbie Bookchin and scores of others. Much as the anarchist Peter Kropotkin provisionally supported the Allied cause in the first World War by signing the Manifesto of the Sixteen, the left of the Left today cannot easily back the Kurds of Rojava without tacitly supporting American imperialism. But the crude support for Assad, the Syrian government, and their Russian backers by "sundry ersatz progressives" and "fatuous self-styled 'anti-imperialists'" means supporting "the genocide and democracide now being planned over in Ankara" and complicity with "the torture, abductions, killings and ethnic cleansing of Kurds that will follow," according to Anna-Sara Malmgren and Robert Hockett (*Haaretz*, 2-2-19).

Welcome to Machiavellian *realpolitik*.

PERSONAL PROPAGANDA: You can download free EPUB, MOBI, PDF, *and* DOCX *files of my latest cyberpunk mystery story "The Death of David Pickett" at 62milepress.com/the-death-of-david-pickett. To find links to my blogs, websites, Facebook, and Instagram, visit my social media aggregator at www.gamatiasz.com. You can purchase copies of my near-future science fiction thriller "1% Free" through either site.*



From the introduction to the first Teaching Resistance column in 2015: "Though the institutions of education are historically problematic and often oppressive, students who have experienced them as 'outsiders' understand the importance of learning from teachers who have struggled with the same systems as outsiders themselves, and who have developed radical notions of what education is and how it works. Sometimes, these students become teachers themselves, helping to subvert these educational institutions or find outside alternatives to them."

Given that much of punk (such as that usually covered in MRR) embraces idealism, strong personal ethics, and intellectualism, it makes sense that so many radical punks have become teachers while remaining punks – it is one of the few "professional" jobs that potentially leaves room for radical expression and empowerment. The personal journeys made by these teachers can help them to have a strong degree of empathy and connection to marginalized and non-conforming students, those who don't fit in to the neat boxes that dominant culture demands and strongly encourages through its institutions (very much including schools).

This month's Teaching Resistance column is by Christiana Cranberry, the guitarist and singer for SISTER RAT and a public school educator presently located in Kansas.

I watched the movie *Suburbia* when I was eleven years old, so 1984. It was overflowing with sexism and violence. It was exploitative, but with a clear eye for how it actually is in real life–toxic from day one (earlier). Director Penelope Spheeris also focused her camera lens on these attitudes toward women in the revealing documentary *The Decline of Western Civilization*. I was willing, as a male-presenting young punk rocker, to overlook most of the misogyny. It came off as silly and reactionary. Suburbia was a drama, a movie. *Decline* was an honest expose of the friction that existed in the highly charged beginning days. Then there were the women in *Decline*. They seemed anything other than weak or passive to me, in fact, I immediately saw my role models in these women. Exene Cervenka takes up the entire stage, larger than life, and full of heart. The women of the punk movement were kicking against these pricks and winning.

For all the macho posturing, punk men often wore makeup and dyed their hair. Punk men cared about the way their clothes fit; how they expressed their internal mood. Punk was feminine, it seethed underneath the surface, rising sporadically to growl and hiss at the bourgeois. Punk brought blaring attention to the reality of child abuse, sexual abuse, and broken homes, most often our own. The cycle of abuse and the toxicity of strict gender roles was apparent in the seventies on televisions shows like *Happy Days*. Mass media latched onto the spectacle of punk, usually focusing on safety pins, colored and charged hair, and make up (best portrayed in *The Day My Kid Turned Punk*). The early '80s were the golden age of punksploitation, but it can still be found today. This was of course a step behind the times, media classically couldn't keep up while punk was at its first fork in the road, definitively split between new wave and hardcore.

New Wave picked up the more colorful elements of punk rock, while hardcore honed in on the aggression. It mirrored the polarizing

times of the Reagan era. Reagan: a showman and war hawk who pushed politics back to the far right. His addled presence at the end of the '80s was analogous to the tenor of the country: angry, misguided, and rapidly more militant; the nation would learn about shadow wars in Latin America. Conversations about Nicaragua that were being had in the lyrics of punk songs would make their way into the living rooms of the middle class. Punk Rock was acting as a pragmatic political tool, but it wasn't immune to the burn out that often leads to meandering, nebulous retrospection. New Wave, beginning as a dada-esque, perfectly valid artistic rebellion, was quickly picked over by the media; its corpse left to slowly decay in gay dance bars. While punk rock's macho expression often feels tempered by irony; it is an expression of a strength and will to power that is far too aware of itself. Hardcore punk is not Mick Jagger's puckish swagger, but more often a drill instructor in the war of poor, white blues [*and I agree with the author that this broader image and public perception of hardcore as such has remained stubbornly persistent despite the long (foundational in fact) and vital history of POC punks in the scene – ed.*].

In punk music, whether it be hardcore, new wave, proto-punk, or beyond, there are those whose main impetus is to entertain, and another strain that strives to teach: anarchy, peace, social libertarianism; mostly, the social became political, as we tried to understand our place at the end of the millennium. We wandered subconsciously aware that we were at the beginning of some great experiment. The '50s image of a relationship was clear male domination, but it was also propaganda employed to quash the undeniable movement of liberation that was seeded during the anarchist and labor movements, post-suffragette women heading were toward a reckoning. The parents of the punk rockers grew up with the civil rights movement that feminism forgot, and they behaved themselves accordingly. Free love was code for sexual recklessness, and the skewed psychosexual power dynamics of suburban key parties. The cracks in the youth movement of the sixties became rills of ego posturing in the seventies, carving out canyons of rock and roll excess in the eighties. Punk's reply to this entrenched male domination was incapable of including trans people and the neurodivergent community. Punk tokenized the hell out of the fringes of these groups, but never fully incorporated them. Unfortunately, punk can be as elitist as it is populist. Still, it pushed into the '90s, and the scrappy underdog of a subculture shifted and rearranged through the relatively mild Clinton era, into the emerging world of everlasting war.

Punk is best understood through zines. They brought a real cohesion to the worldwide community. I read about kids hanging out in parks, a sort of early occupy movement. I grew up reading about punk in my dad's issues of *High Times* from seventy-eight along to about eighty-three. There were often short articles and letters from punks and the parents of punk rockers, and though I took it as a source with a grain of salt, I feel like it was a fairly unfiltered look at the era. Besides being students of counterculture, my father and I also shared a physiological trait that made us feel diametrically opposed, mind and body. My dad, incapable of facing ridicule and lowered status as a trans woman, hid it nearly his entire life. I do not begrudge him this, as I witnessed the shaming when any signs of his transsexual yearnings bubbled to the surface. My mother openly hated him for it, and equated him with myself. Punk Rock got me out of that house, several years after my father and brother made their exodus. Homeless the day I graduated high school, I was dependent on my gang. We were a very disparate group of people, all looking for the perfect balance of independence and family. As a trans woman, I was properly armed with female role models, but desperately, few trans. I found myself despondently scouring *Maximum Rocknroll, Profane Existence, Slug and Lettuce*, etc. for any sign of life from trans punk rockers, what I found was very bold crossdressers, brilliant and funny drag queens, the self-hating Jayne County, and several others from the same generation.

The founding punks who dared to cross gender lines, to fuck gender roles entirely, were very inspiring but seemed trapped in the mores of the seventies and eighties, unable to fathom the future movement of transgender and transexual folks. The trans kids today tend to lean way farther to the far left than the trans population of these generations and older. They are the children of punks and metal, removing themselves from its sexism and misogyny. The internet has taken the conversations we had in MRR and ran with it thanks to trans punk rockers. Punk in the beginning of the 21st century has been revitalized in the Trump era. Kevin Seconds, Ian MacKaye, Dave Dictor, and many more seminal punk singers challenged strict, male gender roles in the eighties, paving a way for men in these last few years of the two-thousand-teens to give me hope for a better future. Because while I didn't see the representation and alliances with trans women and men, and the neurodivergent community then, these communities could only truly coalesce in the internet age. The time when information is key, and conversation, both dialectical, and myopically social, we are finally freed from the yoke of upper crusty gatekeepers.

Social justice and freedom of speech are not anathema, they can work together to expose hate: without being able to see the problem, how can we fix it? I refuse to believe that trans and queer punks bringing the notion out of the safe space out of the riot grrrl movement is an admission of defeat. I believe that when marginalized people are allowed to gather together, they can heal emotional traumas, and set about doing the larger work of economic and other reforms. When people are under attack, they tend to group together, and are wary of those who offer comfort when they don't appear to be suffering in the same ways.

Today, I look around and I see the hardcore kids are mostly adults. I see my crust punk friends sobering up. My friends are taking jobs in social work. Some of us learned these concepts at youth shelters like P.H.A.S.E. in Austin. I heard it in the lyrics of Jeff Ott's Fifteen. I gained emotional intelligence and considered socialism through the lyrics of Lance Hahn. Punk taught us to be better humans. Even the most macho hardcore guy is often someone I trust a little more than your average Joe, not always though. I'm happy that there is still hardcore music. I miss melodic hardcore, but there have been some solid whisperings of a return to intelligent pop punk. This makes me happy because while I love hardcore, crust, d-beat, powerviolence, I also love pop punk, roots punk, and at the risk of being exiled, a lot of music that isn't punk. In the '90s, this wasn't a very popular place to be.

Growing up in the bible belt was far from easy. Being transgender only added significant weight to the load. I couldn't be open about being trans, but at least there was a decent punk scene when I started going out in '87/'88. Unfortunately, hardcore punk was heading toward crossover, and metal attitudes were the exact thing I was desperate to get away from. There were plenty of metalheads at my junior high willing to add to the daily torture of being different in the center of the bible belt, and there was nothing punk about that. Another example of my early disenfranchisement became evident in the difference between the first Agnostic Front album compared to the extremely conservative second album. My earliest memories of punk was the deep excitement I felt from the urgency and pure energy, and conversely, the revulsion I felt from the sexism, macho attitudes, and growing nationalism.

Fast forward to long after the days of crossover, which retrospectively produced a few fucking great albums. In the late nineties, the men around me started claiming they never were punk, and I found myself surrounded by metalheads with no discernible politics. While homeless, I'd often find myself in very frightening situations, because I was clearly feminine. I had knives pulled on me, I was kicked in the face repeatedly. Fortunately, I was able to sober up 16 years ago, and transition fifteen years ago. It took getting off

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the streets. I had to have my baseline needs met before I could even consider transitioning. Besides the support I received from my wife, and the lyrics of Fugazi, Stiff Little Fingers, and Fuel I would probably be dead. I have a broken femur and splenectomy to prove it was possible if not imminent.

When I was getting thrown into cars by boneheads in high school, I was armed with words, set to driving music, that expressed nearly-exactly how I felt inside. When the ignorance that surrounded me tore down all my defenses, I would grow strong by the lyrics. It was the most powerful elixir in the world. "Thanks for telling that joke to me, I have a name for that." When singer Sarah Kirsch came out as trans, I finally felt like there was someone in the world who was similar to me. I finally felt like I would be able to talk to someone who explicitly understood my pain. We would bond over what we hid, how it harmed us, and the hope we had for our futures. I dreamed of these things as I sent all the money I could to try to alleviate her suffering. Tragically, I had to do that because weeks after I found out she was transitioning, I learned she had a rare disease: fanconi anemia. I wished over and over she would pull through. I needed a sister who was born out of punk rock. I needed her to tell me that we would be okay. When she died, I felt more alone than ever.

Laura Jane Grace bravely came out of the closet to a massive audience. The internet had for several years been making it easier for young transitioning trans, non-binary, and gender fluid kids to find each other. They were building a revolution. They used social media platforms to get their voices out. They shared videos highlighting their changes, and they didn't need the counterculture the seventies built to get there. Gender exists outside of that, and punk is a side note, but hardcore music is life affirming. We know how well it can instill resilience, something trans people need. There is a growing, tight-knit underground of trans punks keeping each other alive. It makes me feel sixteen again. I feel like I did when I just found punk rock. We all absolutely should be screaming for the rights of these kids.

What punk got right was its social justice; its dedication to harm reduction: Matty Luv of Hickey and his girlfriend Ro started the San Francisco Needle Exchange, for example. I was homeless, I was an alcoholic, I hit rock bottom and moved in. It took a long time to heal from that. While floating helpless as a plastic bag caught in the wind, I learned what organizations were doing the work to keep homeless people alive. Government has provided nearly no safety net when your life goes down the tubes. Punk rockers are often the ones sewing these gaping holes shut. We, the egalitarian intelligentsia, have to take care of one another first, so we can have the energy to fix everything else. Right now I do my part as a paraprofessional at a high school in Kansas. My only hope is that the presence of a punk rock trans woman in the halls shows teens the power of survival.

Trans rights are part of the modern era, and there is much work left to do there. It is no fault of zine editors to have excluded or mocked trans people in the past. We have been one of the most acceptable punching bags forever. What is new is being used as a wedge issue in politics. We are under attack, in actual danger, and definitely could use the strength of punk. We struggle to take it, to be seen, to walk together with culture warriors. A cursory glance of older issues of punk rock zines will see the word retard used for almost every single slightly frowned upon subject. In reviews, letters, columns, the neurodivergent weren't seen as humans with something to offer the world. Things have improved though. There is an incline in education and understanding in punk that these communities deserve humanizing and protecting. When I was a teen, I met some skinheads at a show. This was 1988, and though they intimidated me, this was before the Metzgers radicalized them into white nationalism. They described themselves this night in Oklahoma City as the "big brothers of the punks, there to look out for the weaker ones." I actually thought that was noble. It made me feel like life was working the way it should. I don't know how truthful they were being honestly, yet I still believe the strong should care for the weak. Punk through its revolutions might have not been equipped to help some groups, but it did create generations of people prepared for the task to come. --*Christiana Cranberry*

The Teaching Resistance column is designed to provide a platform for radical, subversive teachers/educators to share their ideas and draw attention to important issues around education; particularly compulsory- and community-based education. If you are a teacher (anywhere in the world) for students of primary or secondary school ages (K-12), Community Colleges, or alternative learning arrangements such as collectivist free schools, and you want to submit an idea for a column, please write an email to teachingresistance@gmail.com; the column will continue in a new form after the print version of MRR ceases production so your submissions will be heard! Also, keep an eye out for the TR book, coming in Fall 2019 on PM Press. –John No, Teaching Resistance editor

I was dismayed and saddened to hear about the end of MRR as a zine. I will write more about this in my final column next month. Let it be known, I had zero input on this decision, I am just a contributor. My year end top ten didn't make it into the Top Ten issue, so here it is for all who care. I do think it offers a different angle to many of the other top tens.

Again, I didn't pay as much attention to new records last year as I could have, but some great records reached my turntable. There was a while in the early '90s when stuff like Screeching Weasel and Green Day was big that me and my friends thought hardcore might never come back. We imagined being like the surf or rockabilly guys, reliving the past and fetishizing old records. I am very grateful that hardcore marches on and I am not living in that grim reality.

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BLOOD PRESSURE *Surrounded* LP (Beach Impediment). Aggressive and tough hardcore. A very contemporary sounding hardcore record, this still has a raw and snotty in your face attitude that obliterates the more technical or accomplished hardcore bands. And it's certainly tight and furious in a meat potatoes hardcore vibe as opposed to anything more progressive or experimental.

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BEYOND PEACE *What's there to be proud of* 7" (Slugsalt Records). When the history of hardcore is written, the chapter on Iowa will not be the thickest. But Iowa generates a crucial band every few years. A few years ago it was Nerv, but now Beyond Peace are laying down some raw, ferocious hardcore that pushes them to the very top of that short list of Iowa Hardcore champions. Catchy, angry, fist pumping hardcore filled with energy. These guys deliver the goods live, probably the best hardcore band to play around here in a while. When world class hardcore like this comes out of a small town in the Midwest it makes me very happy and gives me hope for the future of the movement.

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EXTENDED HELL *Call of the void* 7" (Desolate). It's 2018 and we are still listening to D Beat Raw Punk. Why? Listen to this record and you will understand. When you strip down hardcore to it's most essential

elements and still need some memorable riffs, you wind up in one of two camps, D-beat Raw Punk/Kang or 82 hardcore. Everything else is just kind of muddying the waters with artsy stuff or musicianship. This style of hardcore is like drinking hard liquor with no mixer, or coffee with no cream or sugar. The pure essentials on display uncut and unfiltered. I am overjoyed bands like Extended Hell and Urchin are still putting out records this good 30 years after Anti Cimex and Shitlickers.

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EXPLOATOR LP (D Takt och rapunk) Totalitar existed for some years before they became widely known beyond a handful of record collectors. For a while around 2000 it seemed like their brand of Kang was going to blow up. Then things quickly blew over, and this genre went back to being to domain of elitist record collectors. In the years since Totalitar broke up there has been a steady stream of awesome records from the ex members playing in different projects, Kvoteringen, Institution, Dissekerad, Katastrof none of which have caused much of a stir outside a narrow range of fandom. But now we have Jallo, Poffen and Lanchy (but not Ante) back together again cranking out a rock solid LP that could have been recorded by the Totalitar of 2002. This record was indeed, music to my ears, a tireless champion of this genre I was so pleased to see it sell out briskly and be so enthusiastically received. All the essential elements are here, it falls just short of the classic 1990's LPs, but is on par with "Vi Ar Eliten" You can't go wrong with this one.

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RAT CAGE *Blood on your boots* 7" (La Vida Es Un Mus) Ripping, raw and energetic hardcore. Not breaking any new ground, but it's totally sick in your face spite filled hardcore.

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WARTHOG Self titled 7" (toxic state) No stranger to top ten lists, this NY hardcore band delivers another crusher. The cover art is kind of cheesy, but at least it's a break of mysterious abstractions in favor of camp horror. Far more contemporary sounding that most of the bands on this list (which are primarily rather retro in their style) this proves you can drop killer hardcore without straying far from the basics. That is to say, a lot of hardcore today sounds like it was made by and for 30-something record records, but you can totally see young kids who don't know anything about 77 or 82 getting low to jams like this and the Beyond Peace 7" cited above.

***

PROFOSS *profosss* 7" (Adult Crash) This features Jona from Infernoh and Fy Fan and it's simply rampaging ra Kang in the Totalitar mould. If not for Exploator this would be the top pick for the year for me from Sweden. Hard hitting, raw hardcore punk that manages to capture that desperate urgency lacking in so much of today's music.

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TRAGEDY *Fury* 12" EP (Tragedy) Did you know Tragedy put out a new record this year? How times have changed. I don't care what anyone says, or how styles have changed, this band and record are sick. It's too bad that Tragedy inspired so, so many weaker clones, because the original is still the great.

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DISSEKERAD *Tomma Ogon* 7" Phobia. Another one of the under the radar post Totalitar bands. With Poffen on vocals. Killer Swedish hardcore.

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DEADLOCK *Deadlock* 7" Painkiller This band shares members with other UK bands like Obstruction and Arms Race, but this is more basic, stripped down 1982 hardcore. Has a bit of that UK punk bounce that made early Negative Approach so infectious. The whole package adds up to some simplistic but powerful back to basics hardcore in the NA/Xclaim! Tradition.

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Also cool, Cankro 7", Physique 12", Tarantula 7", Strul 7", Damaged Head 7", No Future 7", No Problem LP, Absolut/Svaveldioxid split LP.

Where were you when you heard the news that *Maximum Rocknroll* was going to be ceasing publication after the next few issues? I saw the announcement in my inbox while I was walking around a grocery store in Houston, Texas, of all places—back for a really short visit to the city that I grew up in, where I first got involved with DIY punk and non-mainstream music when I was a young teen in the late '90s. As a weird kid isolated on the outskirts of a huge, sprawling city that always seemed like a total cultural wasteland, the only connections to the underground that I had available to me in that era before widespread internet access were college radio and whatever mass-distributed zines (including *MRR*) I could find at strip mall newsstands. It's a sentiment that I heard echoed repeatedly by others as they processed the big announcement from *MRR*, unpacking how this magazine had helped them feel connected to something bigger than the reality of their own small-minded towns, and how it had unlocked a secret door leading to almost infinite pathways of information and resources that had been previously inaccessible and were just waiting to be explored. I won't go too deeply into that idea here because this column will be the last chance I have to go about things relatively normally and just talk about obscure early '80s femme-punks or new demos from basement No Wavers like I always do, but it's something that I'm definitely going to come back to next month in the final issue of this magazine. Take nothing for granted; you don't know what you've got until it's gone.

The debut cassette from the SHIFTERS was one of a small handful of things that I talked about almost exactly four years ago in my first column in this magazine, so it seems strangely appropriate to be coming back to them and their new split LP with fellow Melbourne group PARSNIP right now in this last music-focused column that I'll write for *MRR* as a print entity. PARSNIP's technicolor mod-pop has a wide-eyed wonder similar to the TELEVISION PERSONALITIES and their Whaam! Records cohort, delivered in a freewheeling rush of warbling organ and sugar-spun harmonies. On "Counterfeit" and "Dailybreader," they draw equal inspiration from '60s sunshine psychedelia and the smudged smabolic jangle of the C86 movement, before capping off their side of the record with a tambourine-bashed, *Girls in the Garage*-styled hipshaker called "Hip Blister" that's as wildly raucous as anything that the PANDORAS or THEE HEADCOATEES ever put to tape. On the flip, the SHIFTERS offer up three tracks of their own, skirting the shaky line between wiry post-punk repetition and off-kilter pop scrawl. Comparisons to the early work of the FALL (including my own) have been a little inevitable—the cryptically sardonic lyrical narratives, the rhythmic tunnel vision, the scratchy sparseness and occasional lackadaisical twang, all constantly on the verge of collapse—but the SHIFTERS have really always been pulling just as much inspiration from other, more disparate directions. The paranoid and tightly-wound "Conscript" is the closest that the group get to Mark E. territory here, while "Photo Op" touches on raw, ramshackle garage stomp in the *Back From the Grave* tradition, and "Righteous Harmonious Fists" hits twin inspirations of no-fidelity

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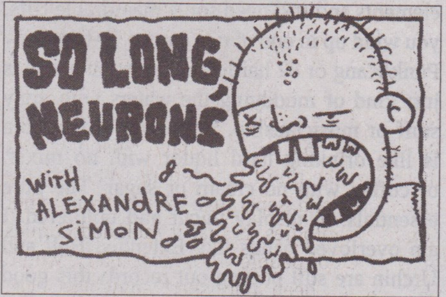
UK DIY messthetics and the skewed pop experiments of Flying Nun's more eccentric 1980s wing. Believe the hype. (Future Folklore, futurefolklorerecords.bandcamp.com)

One of the casualties of the year-end list that I had to send off in mid-December was CHRONOPHAGE's debut LP *Prolog for Tomorrow*, which quietly turned up in the last few days of 2018. Their *Give Chance a Peace* tour cassette from earlier in 2018 skimmed through the textbook of outsider pop inspirations from the past fifty years (the VELVET UNDERGROUND, the whole Flying Nun/Xpressway scene in New Zealand, scratchy '78-'83 UK DIY, early '90s lo-fi home recorders, etc.), and while the group is definitely still citing many of those same references this time around, the songs on the LP really work together as a much more cohesive and singular statement of intent. Sometimes the end result is urgent and skittish (the shambolic primitive-punk crash of "Days of Our Lives," or the jittery HUMAN SWITCHBOARD-isms of "She Paid the Ultimate Price), sometimes it's more spartan and sweet ("Dance to Guitar" recalls the best of BEAT HAPPENING, by which I mean the songs that Heather sang), but CHRONOPHAGE alway strike the perfect balance between noise and melody, leaving all of their rough edges exposed but never venturing too off course from a fractured pop accessibility. *Prolog for Tomorrow* somehow manages to sound both completely timeless and utterly out of its time; an unassumingly charming and wonderful record. (Cleta Patra, cletapatrarecords.bandcamp.com)

Matthias Andersson, the mind behind the experimentally-bent underground musical empire built around Swedish label I Dischi Del Barone and print zine *Fördämning*, has just launched a new archival reissue offshoot called (appropriately) Fördämning Arkiv, and its first release is an amazing anthology LP for Sweden's early '80s DIY heroines SPORTEN ÄR DÖD. The group's name translates to "*the sport is dead*," and if you've seen the great 2013 film *We Are The Best!*, there's more than a few parallels that could be drawn between SPORTEN ÄR DÖD and the movie's unnamed fictional band of teen punk girls from Stockholm circa 1982 (whose signature song was, perhaps not coincidentally, titled "Hate the Sport"). The real-life story of SPORTEN ÄR DÖD is essentially as follows: three 16-year-olds enamored with early Rough Trade-style post-punk (RAINCOATS, MO-DETTES, etc.) start playing music together outside Gothenburg around 1980, record an eight-song demo and release it in a tiny run of 100 cassettes in 1981, then completely splinter the following year. The trio's self-taught sound was generally more in line with the minimalist, pop-informed approach of contemporaries like NEO BOYS or UNIT 4 than with the more jagged and angular DELTA 5/ESSENTIAL LOGIC school of late '70s/early '80s femme-punk, although KLEENEX might be their personal bridge between those two impulses—check that choppy, stop/start rhythm and the doubled "*ahhh ahhh ahhh*" vocals in "Raider," their ode to the Swedish version of the Twix candy bar! In addition to all of the original demo tracks, the LP also includes a live set of nine songs recorded in 1982 (most of which are otherwise unreleased), plus a beautifully-presented insert booklet with photos and notes from guitarist/singer Ulla Åkerström, and the entire package is a totally essential artifact for disciples of the international DIY girl underground. (Fördämning Arkiv, iddb.se)

I know essentially nothing about this fairly new three-piece from Olympia called TOY, beyond the fact that their debut cassette *Live at Curry Night* was apparently recorded at their very first show and the five songs therein are all positioned squarely at the nexus of *things that I like*—dark, repetitive bass lines at the forefront, vocals that manage to be simultaneously anxious and detached, sparse No Wave guitar scrape, insistent and writhing rhythms. As might be expected of a live tape of a new band's debut performance (and at what I'm assuming is a DIY space), the recording is pretty raw and stripped-down, but it also lends a welcome immediacy to the demo, emphasizing the sorts of off-kilter and imperfect elements that made art-punk in the *Messthetics* lineage so appealing to me. "3" snakes along to some heavily hi-hat-spiked mutant disco drumming and a mostly two-note infinite loop bassline like a modern Oly-spawned BUSH TETRAS, with vocals buried deep in the mix as almost subliminal incantations, while the slow-burning and sinister post-punk crawl of "1" ultimately builds up into a hauntingly caustic chant of "*shouldn't have wasted my time on you*" that's unmistakable and cuts deep. This TOY demo is exactly the sort of unheralded and out-of-nowhere discovery that's kept me writing this column since 2015, even when I felt overwhelmed and on the brink of mental meltdown (almost every month, without fail), and I really hope that I have a place to keep shouting out to the overlooked weirdos and geniuses of punk future and past in whatever form *MRR* might take on next. (Reflective Tapes, reflectivetapes.bandcamp.com)

Say hey at ripitupstartagain@gmail.com, more sights and sounds at futuresandpasts.org.



"Everything that detractors say about it is true. It was a raggedy-ass thing held together with paste and staples. It didn't have really high production values."
— Peter Bagge

Lately I've been working on a French translation of *The Stickboy Saga*. For those unlucky saps who haven't heard about it, *Stickboy* was a U.S alternative comic created by Dennis Worden in 1988. There were eight issues, the first three of which were published by Fantagraphics. To me it's one of the best comics ever, up there with *Hate, Angry Youth Comics, Eightball, Schizo* and *Suicida*. Since this is *MRR* and not *The Comics Journal*, here's a bit of punk context for y'all—Worden used to draw for *Flipside*, he saw Middle Class and TSOL in the early '80s, his favorite bands then included Discharge, Flipper and the Meat Puppets, and the last of the rock critics, Byron Coley, ranks *Stickboy* pretty high.

Worden's drawing style is a unique combination of simple, flat cartoon invention and screwball hallucinogenic primitivism, he wrote in *Forced Exposure* at the time "it sends you barreling down a wide river of shit that you notice is actually pretty sophisticated just about the time you go flying out over the edge of the falls and begin yr plummet into the unforgiving turd-reef below", he added, before concluding that "this continuing saga of self-investigation and active loathing just gets better as its episodes explode down the corridors of life, moving between levels of realism w/ a smoothness that would make Phil Dick twitch enviously inside his coffin."

Aside from translating his work, I've been studying Worden's life, hoping to write a decent foreword. One thing I can say for sure? This guy is one of us. He dropped acid in conservative Orange County during the '60s, got permanently damaged after a bad trip, purposely became homeless and travelled around in the '70s, got involved with a cult in Hawaii, went to HC punk gigs by himself in the early '80s, and spent the '90s translating that life experience into *Stickboy*. Last but not least, he was a regular contributor to *Weirdo* magazine.

As you may know, *Weirdo* was Robert Crumb's publication. It ran from 1981 to 1993. Crumb always drew the covers and

contributed comics, but that mag was a collective venture. Notable contributors included Charles Burns, Daniel Clowes, Julie Doucet, Gilbert Hernandez, John Holstrom, Raymond Pettibon, Savage Pencil, Gary Panter, Joe Sacco, S. Clay Wilson… But that's just the tip of the iceberg. What's most important, and separates *Weirdo* from other comic anthologies, is that it included comics by a bunch of people who, most likely, would have never been published anywhere else. Unlike *Raw*, the other big alternative comic anthology at the time, *Weirdo* was lowbrow and open as fuck—it seems that the only condition to be included was for the work to be liked by Crumb (and later by Peter Bagge or Aline Kominsky, when they took the editing reins). "We printed works by certified lunatics, primitives, psychopaths, artists who came and went…" said Crumb in retrospect. "It was the work of idiot savants," confirmed Peter Bagge, "putting content and personal vision above all else. It was stuff that was totally amateurish. Crumb in particular would use it if he thought the person who did it was crazy enough. He ran stuff literally by inmates of insane asylums." Of course, this meant *Weirdo* wasn't for everyone. But those who loved it, loved it deeply. It filled a void and created a community of outcasts, oddballs and revolutionaries, who all read each other, collaborated together and created their own world, regardless of the commercial viability of it all. "Once *Weirdo* died," said Peter Bagge, "there was nothing exactly like it. There's other anthologies that I like, but nothing has that iconoclastic spirit that always floats my boat."

Sounds familiar? When I heard *Maximum Rocknroll* was gonna cease print, I was in the middle of compiling infos about *Weirdo*, and the parallel struck me. Both magazines were born in California, both around the same time, and both were the products of generous and hard-working minds—older, stubborn fuckers who loved their subject with a passion so pure and unfiltered it was bound to attract others like a giant magnet. In this context, it doesn't seem too far-fetched to say that Tim Yohannan was to MRR what Crumb was to *Weirdo*. "Crumb was open to anyone submitting stuff," Worden told me recently, "which we all loved him for." I don't think the word love is an exaggeration here—at their best, magazines like *Weirdo* and *MRR* have been tools to give a voice to the voiceless. Empowering tools. They gave a chance to people (cartoonists, musicians, writers…) that others wouldn't deign to consider.

It might not be obvious to the youngest readers, but for most of its lifespan, MRR has been home to a wide variety of unruly voices, and when I say unruly I don't only mean politically speaking. I mean, GG Allin has written in these pages, remember? So did George Tabb and Mykel Board who, not so long ago, were integral parts of this mag's identity. I'm not mentioning these three to be controversial, but because for every clueless fucker complaining MRR was "too politically correct" or that it was "the CIA," there's been a column by one of these guys or an interview with the Last Sons of Krypton or Out With A Bang. I think a lot of people don't get this; in many ways, writing for *MRR* means total freedom. I mean, sure, the aforementioned columnists got fired eventually, but *MRR* gave them a voice every month for a decade or two. On a personal note, all I can say is that I've written 56 columns for this rag, and no one ever told me what to do. Not once. Not even when I started. I can't imagine many printed magazines functioning like this… Especially not today.

When flipping through issues of *Weirdo*, it's nice to see the content evolving year after year, depending who's in charge. Phase one ended when Crumb, "sick of all the hippie nonsense you have to put up with to be editor of something like that," handed the reins to Peter Bagge ("He just asked me to do it" remembers Bagge. "We didn't even know each other, other than a short snail-mail exchange. He told me later that I was the least neurotic person he could think of."). Bagge was younger, he hung out with people like John Holmstrom (*Punk* magazine), and Crumb chose him because there was a new generation of punk cartoonists, particularly on the East Coast, who he wanted to include but felt he wasn't the most qualified to deal with, if only because he lived in California. So *Weirdo* entered its punk phase, with younger, more modern, less hippy contributors—people like JD King (who in those days played in the Coachmen with Thurston Moore), but also Pettibon, Savage Pencil or, well, Dennis Worden, just to name a few. The third and last phase began in 1986, when Aline Kominsky became editor. An interesting turn of event, if only for the fact that *Weirdo* so preeminently featured comics dealing with sexual matters in a rather crude way, and Kominsky decided to be more inclusive towards women cartoonists, which means that the focus shifted from crude drawings of dicks to crude drawings of dicks *and* period blood—a shift angry readers regularly complained about in the letters section (in those days it seems that alternative comics were primarily read by sweaty, isolated, nerdy white males).

Again, it's hard not to draw a parallel with *MRR* and its many phases. Do people realize this magazine works like this, too? When I say people, I'm thinking of these punks who barely if ever read it, but still insist on trashing it. My guess is they just follow MRR on social networks and, with their vision blurred and twisted by corporate-based addiction, somehow view their online interactions as significative. I mean, when they tell me "*MRR* sucks these days," all I can do is scratch my head. Seriously, what do they mean? It sucks since Grace Ambrose left? Or, it's not as good as during the days of Arwen Curry andMike Thorn, when *MRR* firmly stood against post-9/11 patriotism? Do they mean current columnists aren't as entertaining as George Tabb? Or perhaps that those columnists write too much about themselves and too little about punk history? Do they wish all columnists were as unselfish as Felix Havoc? Do they mean MRR should feature more comics? More fiction? More Peruvian d-beat, more Icelandic grind, more UKDIY, more Layla Gibbon, more stories about the ghost of Tim Yo? Fuck if they know.

I hate to sound like a bitter, cynical nerd, but with the mag on his deathbed and all, I can't help remembering all the ignorant comments heard over the years, from people who didn't get MRR was theirs as much as anyone else's, and who never deigned to get involved. Because at the end of the day, of course there's been phases when this mag was less interesting to me, and of course the music covered wasn't always what I was into at a given moment, and some of the decisions of certain coordinators made me cringe, but come on : in the grand scheme of things, those are just details. What's important about MRR is the network it created, and no, I'm not talking about the punk network, but specifically about the MRR network. What's important is that, for close to 40 years, it remained a one-of-a-kind social experiment, a collective all-volunteer venture IRL, trying and sometimes even succeeding (!) at creating the kind of world we still dare to hope for when we're not crushed by corporate nightmares.

Like *Weirdo*, MRR is or was first and foremost an interface, i.e, to quote a dictionary, "A point where two systems, subjects, organizations, etc. meet and interact". I might be stretching the meaning of the word here, but bear with me, OK ? What I mean is that a computer, regardless of the particular way how one uses it, is one type of interface; a printed mag like *MRR* is another. When one's mind enters a digital interface, it's stuck in a world that happens to be corporate-based, profit-driven, and full of ads, designed to lower its attention span and turn him/ her into some kind of addict. Whereas in the printed world, the mind is stuck in another type of interface, free from a lot of the aforementioned BS, more inclined to actually think. When it comes to punk, *MRR*-as-a-printed-mag was one of our last non-corporate, autonomous, international interfaces. So what's left now ? A little earlier, I was saying *Weirdo* gave a voice to the voiceless, by printing the works of cartoonists who couldn't fit anywhere else. Some would argue the voiceless now have a voice anyway, thanks to the web. But screaming into a microphone handed to you by the richest and most powerful people on the planet will never

be the same as screaming into a microphone of your own. So, what I hope for is that the end of this mag will force people to see the bigger picture, re-evaluate MRR, study its long and insane history, and better understand what it always stood for. And, eventually, try to create something similar somewhere else.

Endnotes.

1. Please read *Amusing Ourselves to Death : Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business* by Neal Postman. From 1985, it's mainly about our relationship to TV, but its analysis of what we lose when we go from a print-based culture to a screen-based one is more relevant then ever. Main point : no matter the content, by nature screens aren't made to learn, nor to communicate, but to entertain.

2. *The book of Weirdo* is out soon on Last Gasp. Someone send me a copy ?

3. Current jams : Shifters split w/ Parsnip, Screamin' Mee-Mees 7", Fungus Brains LP, Jazz Destroyers live 1981, The Fugs, Ursa and Doc Corbin Dart.

4. For weirdos still buying small fanzines, these days I write for *Psycho Disco* (music fanzine, in French) and draw for *Adra* (graphic zine, no language), both of which have new issues out soon.

5. ratcharge@gmail.com

Sound Guide 2: The Mix

Welcome to the second part of my sound guide series. This month, I'm bringing a topic that was requested by a reader. It's also a highly relevant topic that always comes up in conversations about sound. You can have a perfect grip on all technical aspects, high end mics and what not, but what is sound without a good mix?

To understand how to mix, it's important to understand that good sound requires a good mix but that a good mix is only 2% of what makes good sound. Good sound is like baking a cake. If all the ingredients are shit, it's gonna be a cake of shit. It's the good old tale of "shit comes in, shit goes out". The first step is obviously making sure that you aren't trying to obtain good sound by mixing shit.

The next step is equipment. A high end expensive oven won't magically turn your cake of shit into a tasty dessert, but an old rusty oven won't necessarily destroy your crisp tasty cake as it bakes. A common misconception, especially in punk where money is tight and equipment sparse, is that you can't get good sound with bad gear. Obviously, you're not gonna get world class sound with mediocre equipment, but you can get at least decent sound with bad equipment if you're willing to make the effort to work around it.

The last step is the actual mix, the 2%. It's a delicate figure that can easily be destroyed by the wrong turn of a few knobs. Or by blindly following a recipe of what *should* be right instead of trusting your ears.

Let's start with the first step: Making sure you aren't mixing shit.

Maybe you're looking for a way to make your band sound better, maybe you overestimated your abilities when you said "sure, we can mix our band ourselves" and are struggling to meet your goals, or maybe you're (aspiring to be) sitting in the sound technician's chair. Nevertheless, the tricks to get good ingredients for your mix are identical. The key factors are volume, tone, comprehensibility and context.

In terms of volume, the struggle with many punk and hardcore bands is loudness. Loudness doesn't make a good mix and there certainly are other ways to obtain an aggressive roaring punchiness. On the other hand, any band can be too silent. And recording or playing at a too silent volume will destroy the mix before you've even begun the mixing process. The overall volume must be adjusted to the setting and the volume of individual sound sources must be adjusted to each other. A sound dogma is that the bands with the quietest lead singers are paired with the guitarist who turn their volume all the way up to beyond ten.

Tone is important both to define your specific sound, but also in terms of a) tuning your instruments and b) not overshadowing each other in a band context. We've all listened to a band's recording to later realize that *ooh so they have two guitarists*. Good tone is also knowing that you'll need to tune your snare differently to make it distinct and tolerable depending on if you play in a noisy raw punk band or a semi-acoustic folk punk band.

Comprehensibility and context go hand in hand. No matter how narrow your sub-genre is, you'll want your audience to comprehend what you are musically communicating. Context is the key, as muffled delay ridden vocals that might be the norm in raw punk hits would never work in a Top 40 pop tune. However, no matter how noisy your raw punk band is, you do want to obtain a sound with elements intelligible to the human ear.

I won't go much into the equipment topic in this column. In the past, there have been columns dedicated to musical equipment and I think that fact alone illuminates why that's too complex a topic to go into in a superficial matter. As well as the fact that any gear talk brings along talks of budgets and class. Of course I enjoy mixing on a brand new $50,000 desk more than on an old $250 desk, but having access to such a desk is a huge privilege. And talking about gear in that league isn't relevant for this column, as it's not going to be relevant for you, the readers. And I've had shitty mixes on an expensive desk and really good class-A sound on an old desk that should belong in a museum.

And exactly that is the point. You have to make it work with the equipment that's available to you, both in punk contexts and in corporate gig contexts. Better gear can be a helpful tool but limit your skills to that and don't be scared off by using not so good gear.

Now, let's take a look at the 2%. The number one tip to mixing is to trust your ears and not your eyes. If it sounds good, there's no reason to make adjustments because your settings don't look "right." Digital desks and appliances bring many visual tools, such as a frequency visualizer. While tools like that can be great for finding tricky feedback frequencies, they can also fool you into believing you should get or manipulate a completely linear frequency output from your sound sources. I recommend to only base your mix on visual tools that are available with analog gear—such as input and output meters.

Sound source fidelity is an important factor for good sound – and a reason to trust your ear and not your eyes when mixing. Only in cases where you are purposely trying to obtain a non-true sound of a certain sound source (such as heavily reverbed drums, vocals with effects, and so on) can you break the rule of fidelity. And if you're the person performing the music, you can of course go crazy in the name of creativity and musical expression.

In live mixing situations, a tool I use a lot is to simply listen to the sound sources before I start turning my knobs. This can both be handy in order to make sure you're not trying to fix things in the mix that are caused by acoustic problems – i.e. Badly tuned drums. But also to make sure you're obtaining the sound that the band is aiming for. Often miked up guitar and bass speakers don't need much work apart from gain and volume settings—just make them sound as the sound coming from their speaker cabinets. In terms of sound fidelity and mixing, note that this counts for staying true to genres as well. Obviously you can't have the same approach for acoustic folk music as death metal.

A dealbreaker for a good mix to me is if the music is living inside an authentic and audible dimensional space (with room for exceptions

when the music calls for a more lo-fi sound or a two-dimensional space).

A mix that has width, depth and height is the key for excellent sound. These physical measures are easy to transform to terms for the audible world.

Width is about contrast and the relationship with your left and right ear. The width of a sound is a matter of if we perceive it as coming from the center of two speakers or how far to the left or right it's coming from. The greater contrast between what's coming from the left and right side, the wider we perceive the sound image.

Hence the key to a wide mix isn't just placement. Two identical guitar tracks panned to each side won't be as wide as you might expect it to be. The trick is to bring in more contrast, for example by using different microphones, or using two takes rather than copying a single track or using a doubling effect.

Note that a mix having width doesn't mean the more width the better. For example, panning cymbals all the way to the left and right, isn't true to the acoustic drum kit sound, neither for the listener or the drummer, and can make a mix sound overproduced.

Height is a strange phenomenon where we perceive high pitched sound as physically coming from above and low pitched sounds as coming from below. Hence, contrasts in the frequency spectrum can create a taller mix. Of course, while still staying true to the sound sources. Where you choose to place a sound source in terms of height is also a way to define the mix – for example a low pitched punchy bass drum versus a clicky, more high pitched bass drum. Overall, the trick to a tall mix is to make sure you use the entire frequency spectrum audible to the human ear. Adding a bit more of low frequencies to a bass drum can do wonders for a mix lacking elements in the low frequencies in terms of height. In my opinion, unlike width you can't be too extreme with height—as long as you stay true to the true sound sources—unless you're aiming for a very lo-fi mix.

Depth is the most complex dimension. The greater contrast in depth, the deeper a mix is perceived. In order to make something sound very close, something else has to sound very far. A rule of thumb is that depth is dependent on three factors: loudness, brightness and the amount of reverb. The louder a sound is, the closer we will perceive it. When mixing, consider where in the space you want a sound to live. Think front to back when you set levels. Where you for example place the vocals will make a huge difference for the mix in general. Keep in mind where a sound is expected to live—for example having backing vocals more to the back and main vocals pretty much up front for most bands and genres or making a choice to place a bass guitar more up front than the norm.

The brighter a sound is, the closer we will perceive it. Often brightness is confused for loudness because of this. Instead of adjusting volumes, rolling off some high frequencies can move a sound more to the back and boosting a bit can move a sound more to the front. This works great for guitars that are too much in the front and overshadowing other instruments too much or vocals that need help getting more to the front to stand out from the band and be more understandable to the audience. But handle with care as this is easy to backfire and create feedback or make a sound even less intelligible.

The more reverb we add to a sound, the further away we will perceive it. Reverb is a big topic in itself, but we can work with this rule of thumb for simplicity. Reverb can be used both as to create a realistic spatial sound but also as an added effect to the sound. It seems that every punk and hardcore band is using heavy reverb on vocals these days, which is getting a good amount of criticism in the scene. I'm not necessarily against the reverb trend, as I see it as a way to create depth and a personal style. But what I'm seeing is that most bands have no idea how to use the effects and don't seem to have put thought into what it does to their sound. Unless they're all aiming for having their vocals sound like muffled reflections coming from across a canyon. A tip for reverb pedals is to find a good relationship between the wet and dry signal, usually adjusted on the "mix" knob or similar.

This is a shame as the key to aggressive hardcore lyrics is to have the vocals barking up front in front of the mix. For reverb, consider how long the reflections are as well as the level of the wet and the dry signals to adjust to your desired sound, no matter what that might be.

What a good mix is, is quite complex and it's impossible to pinpoint a single factor that makes for a great mix. While there is no "great mix" knob to turn, there sure are many knobs you can turn that'll make your mix sound like shit. There are no quick fixes. It's all about learning for experience and knowing that you will never stop learning and improving. But it's also about knowing when to stop working, when a mix or certain sound source sounds good enough. A one hour snare drum sound check is good for nothing, and once you have a live band up and running with a good mix, don't fall for the illusion that you should be turning knobs constantly.

Happy mixing out there and remember that sound, like us, lives in a three dimensional space!

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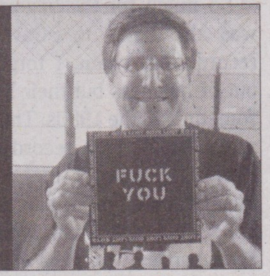

SID LIVES (ACTUALLY, HE DOESN'T)

Kenmore Square in Boston (forever immortalized in LAST RIGHTS' "So Ends Our Night") used to be a much more happening place—it was seedy, it was grimy, it could be a bit dangerous. I've written about this in the past. Anyway, those days passed a long time ago. It's been (or is in the process of being) taken over by overpriced hotels and planned high-rise,"mixed-use" developments. One block was completely bulldozed for the hideous, monstrous, overpriced Hotel Commonwealth. It eradicated a lot of Kenmore's history and charm. The legendary Boston punk club The Rat, low-priced pizza joints like Nemo's and the Pizza Pad, Charlie's Cafeteria, an Army-Navy store and a few record stores were part of the landscape. I spent a good amount of my four years at Boston University ('78-'82) going through the bins at Nuggets, which always had promo copies of new LPs at cheap prices, as well as gem-filled bargain bins. The first record I snagged was AC/DC's "Powerage" (still their best album) for $2.99. I found a copy of the SUICIDE COMMANDOS' unjustifiably-overlooked classic "Make A Record" for $1.99 about a year later. They even had Lenny Kaye autograph the wall.

Lenny is best-known as PATTI SMITH's longtime guitarist, but he was also the "curator" (God, I hate that term) of the original "Nuggets" compilation from 1972 and that's obviously where the store got its name from. Lenny's words of wisdom were "It's a Nugget if you dug it!" The compilation, whose full title was "Nuggets: Original Artyfacts From The First Psychedelic Era," was a double LP of not-exactly underground bands like COUNT FIVE, SHADOWS OF KNIGHT, ELECTRIC PRUNES, THE SEEDS, BLUES MAGOOS, THE NAZZ and a lot more, and the liner notes said, *"The name that has been unofficially coined for them—"punk-rock"—seems particularly fitting in this sense."* Remember this was 1972 and perhaps those songs weren't getting played that much on the radio as they were in the 60s. This was before the so-called garage revival spurred a lot of interest in those bands and more obscure ones. Lester Bangs, Dave Marsh (*Rolling Stone)* and Greg Shaw (founder of *Bomp!* Magazine) all used the term in their writing in '70 and '71.

So much for the history lesson. Kenmore was also home to Strawberries, a regional record store chain. I forget when they went out of business but their heyday was over by sometime in the 1980s. They had a pretty good selection of punk records in the downtown Boston location. I mentioned them in last month's column—it was where I bought my ticket for the first local CLASH show. Strawberries would have Midnight Madness sales every so often where all the records would be discounted. I got the REZILLOS' "Can't Stand The Rezillos" LP on my first excursion. I also went to one on February 2, 1979. That date might sound familiar. We'll get to why in a moment.

My hometown friend and newspaper delivery crew co-worker Tom was attending Northeastern University. He was living in a frat house and called me up and asked if I'd ever heard of a band called the REAL KIDS. Tom wasn't into punk at all. Pop and disco were more of his thing—I still cringe when thinking of listening to CHIC's "Yowza Yowza Yowza" or whatever the fuck that song was called while riding around in his Ford Bronco (you know—OJ Simpson's vehicle of choice). I told him, "of COURSE I've heard of them…" Turns out they were playing his frat on that fated evening of February 2, 1979. I made it to the show and was ridiculed by my dorm-mate Bob, who accompanied me, for wearing a cardigan sweater. Bob kept calling me Ozzie all night—not as in Osbourne but as in Nelson i.e. Ozzie Nelson from the old "Ozzie and Harriet" TV show. The REAL KIDS were great, although my attempt to connect with any women there was a miserable failure.

Incidentally, if you ever wondered where I got my colorful vocabulary, it was on that crew. I can still hear another co-worker, Joe, complaining in his nasally, Mass-accented voice, about a route being "a real pain in the pud." That was before Tom pulled over, went around to the other side of the Bronco, opened the door and pushed Joe into the snow along with the newspapers he was supposed to deliver. And "pud" was one of the milder terms that Joe used.

Sorry, got sidetracked yet again. On the way back to my dorm, I popped into Strawberries for the midnight sale and, this time, I picked up the SEX PISTOLS' "Never Mind The Bollocks" album. Believe it or not, I hadn't bought it up to that point even though "God Save The Queen" was the song that changed my life in 1977. When I got back to the dorm, another dorm-mate looked at my purchase and said, "oh you must have heard then…" I looked at him quizzically and he said, "Sid died…" I had no idea. It was a complete coincidence. Strange and eerie. Of course, it's not like I was listening to anything that he played on. The story goes that Steve Jones played all the bass tracks except on "Bodies" and Sid's bass-lines were buried in the mix.

I have another perhaps eerie Sid-related anecdote. A few months before, I was dating a girl named Becky and we went to a Halloween party at a local dance club. She was a huge movie buff and went as Charlie Chaplin. I decided to let my inner punk flag fly and took a torn white t-shirt and scribbled SEX PISTOLS on it and borrowed a chain necklace (no padlock, though) from Jim, one of the only people in my dorm into punk (I mentioned him in last month's column, too). I went upstairs to pick up Becky and, the second I walked into the room next to hers, one of the girls started screaming at me. Becky quickly got me out of the room and then explained to me that the girl's sister had been best friends with Nancy Spungen. This was about two weeks after Nancy had been murdered so, yeah, my timing wasn't too great. Becky said I shouldn't feel badly about it and that I obviously didn't know. Maybe I should have borrowed Jim's ULTRAVOX shirt instead. Our relationship fizzled pretty quickly after that but I don't think it was about me being a PISTOLS fan. In fact, it wasn't but no one wants to hear a sob story so…

But, yeah, it's the 40th anniversary of Sid's death. And there were plenty of punks who admired and perhaps wanted to emulate him or pay tribute. During the summer of 1980, there was the Heatwave festival outside of Toronto that featured some nominally punk and new wave bands (opened by the underrated TEENAGE HEAD and headlined by ELVIS COSTELLO) and the review in *Trouser Press* mentioned there were tabs of acid being passed around with Sid's name on them. I've always wondered—not that often but in passing—if, had Sid lived, Malcolm McLaren would have installed him as their frontman and brought in a competent bass player (maybe Glen Matlock again). He actually had an OK voice, if you listen to the EDDIE COCHRAN covers on "The Great Rock 'n' Roll Swindle" album and "My Way" is an all-time classic. I own the "Sid Sings" album (a live NYC recording), mainly to keep my admittedly-incomplete PISTOLS collection together, but can't bring myself to take it off the shelf and see how it holds up. I remember reading another *Trouser Press* review that said it was "morbid and disgusting." I'll take their word for it. I only paid a buck or two for it, anyway.

I've never been much for hero worship, idolizing so-called iconic individuals. I've certainly admired people, generally those who I've met in person and have left a positive impression, making some sort of personal connection. They've influenced certain things but I've really never felt the urge to completely emulate them, but use that inspiration to better my own situation. MDC, ARTICLES OF FAITH and TOXIC REASONS were all bands who had songs that got me thinking about the world around me and my own life. They planted the seed that made me realize I didn't have to do what others expected. I didn't have to buy into the whole "American Dream." I figured out very quickly it was all bullshit, anyway.

I'm not looking for any sort of guru. There are shelves full of books and TV and online stations full of programming from various self-help hucksters (let's call them what they are) offering you enlightenment, the key to a better life and fulfillment. I'm not talking about religious figures, although a lot of the people peddle some kind of bogus spirituality. I'm not sure if it's narcissism or wanting to make a quick buck or maybe a combination of both. I always chuckle that I'm in the wrong business. Maybe I should become some sort of punk rock shaman. I think there are probably at least a few people who aspire to do just that. It's true that I've found some sort of salvation, in a way, through punk rock, but also learned to not take everything at face value. I'm embarrassed to admit that wasn't always the case in my younger days. I also learned that some people I admired or respected turned out to be full of shit.

But enough about me. I was talking about Sid being an icon to some punks and GG ALLIN also seems to have achieved that sort of status in some quarters. GG was not dumb by any stretch but, from my armchair observation, it seemed as though he felt he had to be the disgustoid GG 24/7 during the last few years of his life. *Hated: GG Allin and the Murder Junkies* is one of the most depressing music documentaries I've ever seen. His antics and his fans, in particular, are often difficult to watch.

The recent *The Allins: One Hell Of A Family* is better crafted but also somewhat depressing, for a number of reasons. This movie focuses not only on GG's musical and personal escapades, but his family dynamics, as well. His mother Arleta laments that she loved Kevin (his real name) but hated GG. His brother Merle, on the other hand, has flogged GG's legacy for all it's worth, even continuing with a current incarnation of the MURDER JUNKIES. Their drummer shoves sticks up his ass, autographs them and then sells them. Merle takes a dump in the toilet and uses the excrement to create paintings. Not too many things gross me out but that was almost a bit much. As for the fans, you can see one paying tribute by literally pissing on GG's headstone at the cemetery. In fact, there was so much vandalism to the stone that it ended up being removed. Punk as fuck, right? It's still worth seeing—I caught it on Showtime.

I knew GG a bit. He was always generous sending me records for review—I'll never sell my copy of "Eat My Fuc" with the hand-drawn cover of a cock shooting its load. He also

contributed a pretty sharp and lucid column shortly before he died (it was published posthumously in issue #33-34 of *Suburban Voice*). Some of it was fairly self-aggrandizing and bombastic. He also suggested I use the full-color photo of him smeared in his own shit for the cover. I have that photo tucked away in the file cabinet along with the hand-written text for the column and a few other letters he sent from prison. But I think these words that he wrote are timeless: *"It's time to send a message to the corporate music industry that we, the real non-conformists, in the rock 'n roll underground cannot be bought and sold-out."* He did urge dropping bombs on Lollapalooza and various music biz conventions. Maybe he meant it in a literal sense, since he said, *"true terrorism must reign in rock 'n roll."* But the underlying theme, that it's important to resist co-optation and defy those entities, is something to always embrace. I'm not sure I would give my blood and guts for it. I'm not sure if people trying to imitate what he did is exactly non-conformist, either—it seems like a herd mentality. You could say that about any sub-group, including in the punk realm. But I still take pride in trying to at least go against the grain and try not to go along to get along.

Next month—the final print column. Hard to believe…

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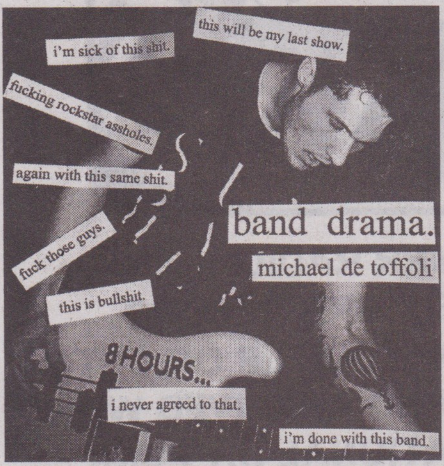

Band Drama

Bandmates require time, attention, patience, forgiveness, stimulation, trust, and a general sense of commitment, same as a partner, and I believe that band relationships are just as important as any romantic relationship. They'll become a part of your life, good or bad, and if you're going to stay together all these things need to be addressed. That's what this column is here for: to discuss why bands fight, why bands work or don't work, why bands succeed, and why bands break up. In almost every way this is kind of a relationship column, to examine the fragile relationships that you have with your bandmates.

None of us that contribute to MRR were told ahead of time that the magazine was going to cease print publishing, we found out via social media just like everyone else. It sounded like a lot of us were really upset about that and felt blindsided and disrespected. I for sure felt blindsided, but what made the whole thing hurt a little less was that I was in the same boat as everyone else. Immediately I started getting texts from people saying "No more MRR??" or trying to ask if I had any more information, and I got to feel like a member of the same community with them. I didn't know any more than anyone else, so I was given the chance to grieve and reel from the blow with everyone else. That was a really hard and scary day, but I appreciated feeling some camaraderie amidst the stunned silence. We had a meeting at the compound seven days later and I came in with a few big ideas to help turn this ol' ship around and save the cause. We were told more details and more about the financial and personal realities that Maximum faces, and slowly each of my ideas became obsolete. This wasn't a meeting to figure out how to save global print media in 2019, it was a meeting to let us know that it was time to move on. Obviously no one in the room was happy to hear that, and no one instinctually wants to walk away from a good feeling thing, but the reality of the situation was that it's time to figure out where to go from here. It's hard to convince someone that there's no other way, but putting them in a situation where there are no other options forces them to accept it that much faster. At least that way they'll move closer to the healing process without wasting time wondering, in my experience.

I've described this column as a relationship column for bands, and I tend to tongue-in-cheek compare it to romantic relationships and find similarities. Truthfully I often call on my romantic history almost as much as my history with bandmates when dealing with heavy things like this. My first relationship lasted for eight and a half years, from the time we were 17 years old to 25. We lived together, we had a dog together, we paid bills together, we talked about marriage and the future together. The last two years we were together were rough, but looking back it was more like the last four years. Regardless of how bad or uncertain things got I always assumed that we'd work it out. I saw her as family and family doesn't leave because of a fight. Worst case scenario we'd get couples counseling or something and become better because of it. We had a big fight one night and she laid out that she wasn't happy. I heard what she was saying but still didn't take it seriously enough to believe that this could be the end. Things got worse, and then much better, out of nowhere, and then nothing. She totally checked out, and then admitted that she had slept with someone else. Nothing has ever hurt me like that before, but honestly there was a sense of closure from it. She knew that we were both growing into different people and that ultimately we needed to move on from each other at some point. She also knew that my personality wouldn't let me accept that and I'd spend the rest of my life internally trying to fix a model that we had grown out of. So she knew that she needed a death knell for our relationship. This way there was no going back, and therefore no use in thinking too much about it. I've learned so much about letting things go because of that. *Maximum Rocknroll* making the announcement publicly before telling those of us that contribute was the right move. Otherwise all of us would have broken the doors of the compound down with schemes to get us back to how things were fifteen years ago. The reality is this decision was a long time coming, and the best way to move forward is to adapt to the world that we live in rather than trying to hold on to the practices of a world that no longer applies to us in 2019. I've written a few BD issues about the scene changing, friends and venues closing or moving, bandmates moving on, and this is another example of just that. At some point everything ends, but more often than not it's because we've outgrown what we originally knew it to be. It's not like giving CPR to a corpse, and it's not like leaving our best years behind us. It's just like it always is: things come to an end when we grow out of them, and the only place to go is the next scary and uncomfortable place that fits who we've become.

(I also what to note that I recognize that I just compared MRR's announcement to my ex cheating on me, and I want to communicate clearly that those are two suuuper different things. I didn't mean to compare the two, only that the blow that I felt from the later was much easier to digest due to the things that I learned from the former.)

Each month BAND DRAMA will either be reviewing a universal issue that all bands face, or I'll be reviewing one of your band's issues. If you'd like a fresh perspective, advice, or just to vent in general (anonymously or not) reach out to banddramamrr@gmail.com. I've been in a lot of bands for the past sixteen years, which means that I've been in a lot of bands that have ended or failed. I'd like to think that I've grown from each, learned from each, and taken the time to reflect on each failure or success. I'm also still learning and experiencing and I always will be. So I want to share what I've learned, as well as learn from all y'all punks in bands too.

COLUMNS

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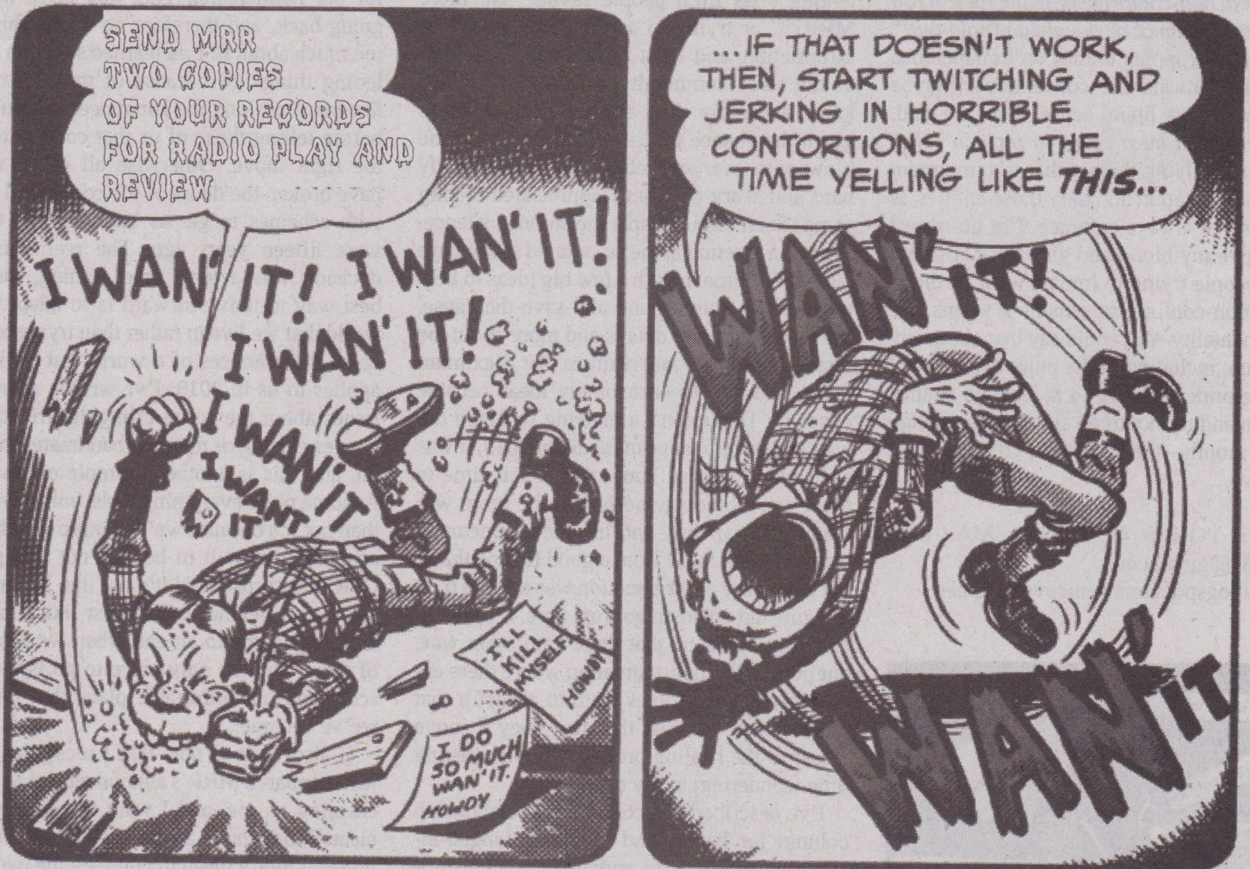

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LEBENDEN TOTEN

Interview & introduction by Erin Yanke.

Photos by Cecee Guzman aka @SKNKBOI and Martin Sorrondeguy.

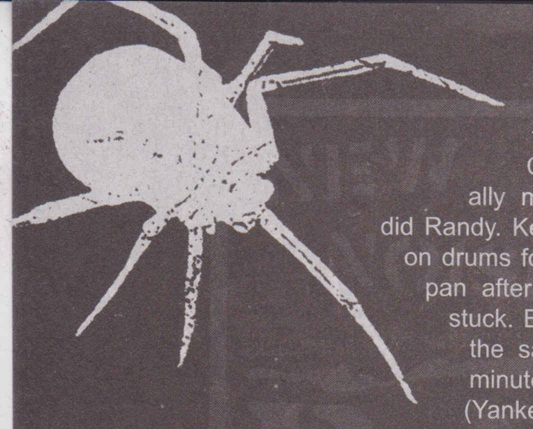
I love Lebenden Toten. Guaranteed to bring the catharsis that I need as a punk in a world that turns on capitalist whim and cruelty. They're creative, exciting, and a Portland treasure. The first time I offered to interview Lebenden Toten for MRR was in 2009. I'm happy to be celebrating the 10 year anniversary of that request with the actual interview! I'd interviewed the whole band the last time they played on Portland's community radio station KBOO in December of 2017, but trying to mix in Keith (drums) and Mira (bass) answers with these was too disjointed. This is written answers to questions I posed. Chanel sings and Frank plays guitar.

NOISE AND MESSAGE

MRR: Your first show was at Grand and Skidmore in 2001 to 2002 New Year's Eve...What were you going for? What was Lebenden Toten responding to when you started? What's the general history of the band?

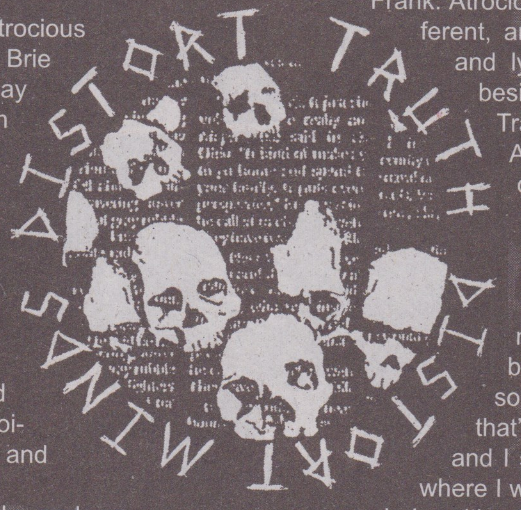
Chanel: I started Atrocious Madness with Saira Huff when I was sixteen. We had a different vocalist for one practice, but it was Frank from there on out. For various reasons, it never really sounded the way we intended for it to. Frank and I came up with the idea for Lebenden Toten when we were both traveling in Europe with other bands. It was before the internet was available everywhere all the time, so we communicated about it via notes left strategically in cities the other person would be passing through. We recruited Randy (drums) and Brie (bass) when we got home.

Frank: I don't think we were responding to anything. Something to consider is that Portland was very different from other punk scenes at the time because it was still really small, and very focused. There wasn't really a lot going on outside of the few people in bands, and those booking shows. Competing is the wrong word, but there weren't really scenes competing with each other. It was all very punk, if you know what I mean. So we weren't trying to be contrary to anything else happening in punk at the time. This has always been a city of creative, confrontational weirdos. Well, it used to be much more. A lot of the punk scene had connections to that general underside of the music and art scene, even if just peripherally, so we all were able to exist in this freaky bubble without much outside irritation we



felt the need to push against. Just noisily fester.

Chanel: Brie eventually moved away, and so did Randy. Keith came on to fill in on drums for our first tour of Japan after Randy left, and he stuck. Brie had to pull out of the same tour at the last minute, so our friend Chris (Yankee Wuss) filled in for her on that tour and played on the 8" that we recorded in Tokyo.



Frank: Chris had also played bass for Atrocious Madness on our European tour in 2002. Brie was our roadie and we managed to play one Lebenden Toten show in Belgium with a sit in drummer. At first it was just Randy and I learning the songs in his attic. Matt from A-political was actually supposed to play bass for us when Chanel and I came up with the whole thing, but he moved back to Baltimore before we ever practiced with him. Brie had a bass, so that was all we needed. We did a bunch recordings with Brie and Randy, and one with Brie and Keith (Poison Wave 7") before the Blood Drinkers and Noise Makers Japanese tour.

Chanel: Brie eventually quit completely, and we asked Devon to join (his name was Paige at the time).

Frank: Devon was playing in A-thetic with people involved in Blood Runs Red, Bog People, probably some other bands... when Brie said she couldn't reasonably participate anymore due to school. I think most of the songs on Near Dark were written before Devon joined. We recorded Near Dark and the Contamination 7" with our friend Steve Lobdell who had been in Faust, Sufi Mind Game, Lords of Falconry and a bunch of psychedelic and noise projects, so he was fully into what we were doing and added a lot to the sound at the time. He also worked on the Mind Parasites LP and had great ideas about recording and mixing. That's jumping forward a bit...

Devon had other plans and things to pursue, and Mira was always up front at our shows, and we knew she could play bass, so that was easy. Somewhere in there Yannick from Feral Ward filled in for one show. There's a live 7" where you can hear Chanel telling him when to start a song. Again, we had most of Mind Parasites written and even had performed some with Devon. There was a point which we weren't sure were going to be able to practice for six months, so we did a rough recording of all our new songs with Mira that was never intended to be released. Unfortunately, after recording the actual Mind Parasites LP, Steve disappeared and we weren't able to finish it for over a year. In the interim, and since it had been eight years or something since we'd released new music, I put out the Stagnation Fragmentation cassette which was the rough demo recordings of all the songs that we had done when Mira first joined.

Chanel: Additional folks who have played with us: Kawakami from Disclose played second guitar for a set we played in Japan during the Blood Drinkers and Noise Makers tour—but it was mainly just noise. I believe a song from that show is on the same live 7" Frank mentions that Yannick was on. Greg from Danava contributed synth parts to Mind Parasites and Scott (Limp Wrist, Needles, Flesh World) plays synth on the Static 12".

MRR: What was the primary difference between Atrocious Madness and Lebenden Toten? Does it even matter anymore, now that it's been so long ago?

Chanel: They're so different. The only reason they get compared is that Frank and I were / are in both bands and that it sort of led into the beginning of Lebenden Toten.

Frank: Atrocious Madness sounded completely different, and had a different approach visually and lyrically. There are some crossovers besides just Chanel and I though. Toni Transmission had recorded all of the Atrocious Madness stuff, and she recorded the first Lebenden Toten demo. Wicked Witch Records released the Atrocious Madness LP and Spectres of Holocaust 7", and the first 7" and first two Lebenden Toten LPs. I get the need to make the reference, but it's been a long time. If it's more relevant to someone to say "ex-Atrocious Madness" that's fine. The main difference is Chanel and I switching guitar and vocals, and that where I wrote all the Atrocious Madness lyrics, she's writing for Lebenden Toten. Lebenden Toten, as Chanel said, was us trying to do what we had intended Atrocious Madness to be. We were more focused musically, and more strict in our sound and songs. The Atrocious Madness visual style was more or less the same as everything I did at the time...fliers, zines, etc. So there was a conscious effort to do something different. Atrocious Madness was very apocalyptic in its world view. Much more stark Discharge: "Sounds of distant aircraft get louder and louder." Lebenden Toten is more mindmelting and literary dystopian future, and I wanted the aesthetic to represent that.

MRR: How has being in a band changed in the last 18 years? How has being in this band changed in the last 18 years?

Chanel: Honestly, I don't think it's changed much for us. The lineup has shifted, but that's about it. The ubiquitousness of the internet has definitely changed the way most people find and access music, but we pretty much still do things the same way we always have.

Frank: I used to have stacks of orders and letters and general band correspondence every week in my PO Box. Obviously that form of communication has shifted and is barely relevant anymore. I do still run direct mail order for all our shirts, records etc...and usually have things only available that way or at shows. I think the shift to internet world is that main thing. Look at MRR. As far as how we've changed? Not much. It's still the same musical approach, with some nefarious influences creeping in. But we definitely haven't gotten more palatable.

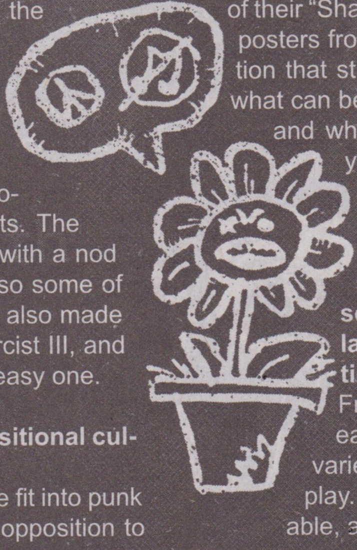
MRR: Can you talk about the art? I also am really into your anniversaries of Lebenden Toten 13 part 2, part 3 etc. Please explain it for those that don't know.

Frank: I realized that it had been 13 years since we'd started. A much more fitting anniversary number then 10. After that it just seemed absurd that we had been a band so long, and every year since then has been "13 Year Anniversary part 2-3-4..." This is mainly for our own amusement, however it does provide visual cues throughout each year. There's even a 13 year anniversary of Nuclear Flowers where we played the whole 7", and made limited shirts. There are posters and merch and a show for each 13 year part-whatever. The idea, and art is influenced by horror and sci-fi films, or books and either have direct relevance to something in the songs or ideas, or something that relates to Lebenden Toten in general. Romero's Living Dead films, and Videodrome references have been lurking around since Atrocious Madness, but are much more exposed in Lebenden Toten. Sometimes they are relevant numerologically, and sometimes the aesthetic just fits. The Static 12" was visually based on Poltergeist, with a nod to Robert Anton Wilson and Max Headroom, so some of that played into the art for that year. Phase IV also made an appearance, and there's also been V, Exorcist III, and Friday the 13th references. Part 6...that's the easy one.

MRR: How does LT fit into punk as an oppositional culture? Is punk an oppositional culture?

Chanel: I've honestly never considered how we fit into punk overall. We do what we do. I see punk as in opposition to the mainstream. Politics are of course part of that, but punk in particular offers the possibility for voices to be heard that would otherwise be ignored or silenced.

Frank: It's interesting and sometimes disheartening to see how punk influences mainstream culture, and how those who started in the punk scene have shifted that experience outside of it. For good and for bad. We manage to do some outside the box things, which keeps it interesting and keeps it from getting comfortable and stagnant. The local label Wyrd War does a lot of transgressive and confusing (to some) events and releases that we've been a part of and it's always exciting to irritate a new group of people, rather than the same ones who see us every month. One of the coolest was playing the closing night of their "Shadow of Demons" exhibit of hand painted movie posters from Ghana. This is the kind of locally based action that still stands as oppositional. I prefer to focus on what can be done to change my immediate surroundings, and what can be done to support and create within your own town as a way of opposing the general malaise of culture.



MRR: Can you talk about the Portland punk scene? How healthy is it? Is the regional scene concept over? How do you think Portland punk fits into the national and international scene?

Frank: The Portland punk scene is great. It's easy, easier than it's ever been. There's a lot of varied bands, scenes crossover, there's places to play...But that also makes things way too comfortable, and lacks the danger and desperation that fuels

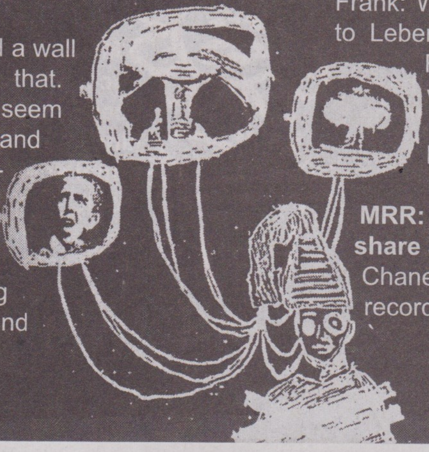
something exciting and confrontational. It's good to have both though, and there's very little reason to complain about the minutiae of the punk scene when until recently those resources were not widely available. I do think the regional scene is over. If for no other reason that you could tell where a band was from based on their style and sound. Then when a weird for their city band like Crucifix or the Iconoclast would pop up, they would be such a stand out anomaly that they would define themselves, and define the scene they came from. This isn't really good or bad in the wider scheme of things, but an observation. We just played in Olympia for the first time, and it was great. I wouldn't say the bands had an "Olympia sound" as I would have defined it ten years ago, but the feeling in the punk scene and the way things were up there was still very reminiscent of shows there in the late '90s / early '00s. I have no idea how Portland fits into anything anymore. It used to be a very specific thing to say "Portland punk," but I don't see that anymore. It definitely used to be just a place to play between the Bay Area and Seattle, whereas now it seems like an intentional destination.

MRR: Lebenden Toten has been described as a mysterious band, because you are not on the internet and don't share the details of your life the way that social media has led us to believe is normal and necessary. Why not the internet? Why stick to the old ways of punk communication? Do you want to address any misconceptions about Lebenden Toten? Do you totally disagree?

Chanel: I don't get that.

Frank: I don't know how other bands operate. I have zero interest in anything related to social media and what is considered normal. I distrust the internet, but understand that is the world now. I just choose to operate with as little association to it as possible.

I don't see the mystery. It's probably just an excuse to say our records are hard to get. Which I also don't understand. I don't know of any conceptions, misconceptions, or otherwise. That being said, bands like Discharge, Crass, Confuse and basically the entire Japanese crust scene of the '90s seemed like they had a wall around them, and I appreciate that. It made what they were doing seem much more important and dire, and you needed to pay attention to incorporate what was happening. That's not an intentional action on our part, but probably why I don't see the need to put anything else out there than we as a band already do. It's all there in the records and artwork and lyrics.



MRR: You're adamant about being a punk band—so what does that mean in these times?

Frank: What I mean is that everyone likes to put new tags on things that they come up with for whatever genre, and in the end we're a punk band and we play punk music. Those are our influences. We're not trying to be something else. We're playing to punks. If you wanna get meta about it, if you want to change things in the world, you need to change things with the people around you or the people that you can actually have an impact on. No one's going to listen to us outside of our group of friends or fans or whatever, so if you can impart some ideas to these people, and since we're all kind of on the same wavelength, maybe we all learn a little bit.

MRR: The general lyrical themes of Lebenden Toten seem to be distrust, dissociation, hidden power, and hidden agendas. True? What moves you to write lyrics? Who writes them? What else is going on that we may not understand?

Chanel: I write most of them. Our perceptions are often distorted and skewed by things outside of our control. The illusion of an orderly, safe and sane world is part of that distortion. Lives are wasted, abused and destroyed within the confines of the expectation of some perfect future to strive for. What do we have control over in an out-of-control reality? I am constantly looking for cracks in the facade; points of weakness that might expose parallel realities and reorient a flawed perspective we've grown comfortable with. I've written about a lot of different things, but this is the common thread that seems to always be there.

MRR: What else is going on with your lives? Other bands, other stuff?

Chanel: Nothing.

Frank: We all have other bands, but they don't relate to Lebenden Toten. I still run Whisper In Darkness Records, sporadically. Keith has Black Water which provides practice space, a record store, and a venue to the majority of the punk scene here.

MRR: Do you make future plans? Do you want to share any with MRR?

Chanel: We have a few new songs that we plan to record soon.

LEBENDEN TOTEN

MRR: Do you have anything you want to say about MRR?

Chanel: I remember skipping school and going to get coffee at Powell's and scour the classifieds in MRR to find people to write to and trade with.

Frank: I don't think punks see the importance of MRR, historically or currently. MRR stopping print is like seeing your neighborhood torn down and replaced with bland condos. Even when there were periods that the majority of the magazine didn't appeal to me, there would always be a record or zine review of something that needed to be found out about, and that was what kept it relevant despite shifts in influence or trends. Punk was desperate, and MRR provided a consistent source of connection. Even though that is provided by other resources now, I think the important thing about MRR was that there was more going on, that while looking for someone selling Crass Records singles or if there was a new Disclose 7" out, you would find out about bands and scenes you weren't aware of and hopefully some inspiration to do something yourself.

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97213

Full Discography

"8 Tracks Demo!" CS, 2002 (self-released)
"Those Deceitful People Why Do They Resort to Money?" CS, 2003 (self-released)
"Nuclear Flowers" EP, 2003 (Wicked Witch)
LEBENDEN TOTEN / SKITKIDS – split CS, 2004 (Gasmask)
"Dead Noise" EP, 2005 (Overthrow)
"State Laughter" 12", 2005 (Wicked Witch)
"Poison Wave" EP, 2006 (self-released)
DEATHCHARGE / LEBENDEN TOTEN – split CS, 2006 (Gasmask)
"Death Culture Deprivation" 8", 2007 (Overthrow)
"Undead Noise Transmission" CS, 2008 (self-released)
"Cataleptic Noise Contamination" CS, 2008 (self-released)
"Near Dark" LP, 2008 (Wicked Witch)
"Contamination!!" 7", 2008 (self-released)
"Die Nacht Der Lebenden Toten" CS, 2007 (self-released)
"Night of the Lebenden Toten" 2x12" and 2xEP box set, 2013 (Wicked Witch)
"Stagnation Fragmentation" CS, 2015 (self-released)
"At the Window" 7" flexi, 2017 (self-released / Wyrd War)
"Static!" 12", 2017 (Iron Lung)
"Static!" CS, 2017 (Black Konflik / Runstate Tapes / Voice from Inside
"Mind Parasites" LP, 2017 (self-released)

CRIME

"HATE US OR LOVE US WE DON'T GIVE A FUCK"

--- Declassified ---
SAN FRANCISCO'S FIRST AND ONLY ROCK'N'ROLL MOVIE: CRIME 1978

SUSPECTS QUESTIONED: Principal inquiry focusing on Director JON BASTIAN. Corroborating Criminal Content provided by Producer HENRY S. ROSENTHAL (alias: *HANK RANK*). Special Guest Appearance by RON GRECO (alias: *RON THE RIPPER*)
MRR-PD INTEROGATION DATE: January 19, 2019. Approx. 2pm. Cloudy.
LOCATION: Hamburger Haven, 800 Clement St., San Francisco, CA 94118.
REPORT FILED BY: Cardwell, Mitch --- Badge #08111978

Preliminary Evidence, should be available at all station houses:

- *Murder By Guitar* LP/CD (Superior Viaduct, 2014)
- *Ugly Things* Zine (Issues #14 and #43)

BACKGROUND: Criminal Enterprise

Surely everyone reading this knows about CRIME. Purely for contextual purposes, we must provide suitable background on this nefarious and now-legendary San Francisco street gang. Known for the use of Punk Rock, a fringe variant of Rock'n'Roll, as their primary weapon and terror tactic, CRIME was formed in SF's mid-1970s by Pennsylvania transplants JOHNNY STRIKE (born Gary John Bassett) and FRANKIE FIX (born Marc D'Agostino). Like-minded goons HANK RANK (born Henry S. Rosenthal) and RON THE RIPPER (born Ron Greco) were soon enlisted and the band immediately launched their campaign to dominate San Francisco's musical underworld. They were successful in their endeavors. Presentation and spectacle were key: CRIME dressed in police drag, vamping menace to The City's upstanding citizenry and its low-life freaks in equal measure. This in-your-face aesthetic coupled with their shit-hot, clashing two-guitar assault ensured CRIME's legacy as SF's most powerful, striking and confrontational band.

Although YouTube's very existence seems reliant on their San Quentin performance clip, accessible celluloid documentation of CRIME's activities has heretofore been unavailable. The sudden emergence of a film, purportedly 40 years in the making, has caused quite a stir locally. Screenings at The Roxie and The Balboa were bedlam, according to undercover reports. The film, succinctly titled *SAN FRANCISCO'S FIRST AND ONLY ROCK'N'ROLL MOVIE: CRIME 1978*, offers an incredibly exciting NEW angle from which to view CRIME in all their brute-force beauty. Director Jon Bastian has crafted what can only be described as the most exhilarating cinematic document of CRIME imaginable: a love-letter noir rockumentary --- non-linear, avant-garde, uncompromising and amazingly PUNK. This excavated footage shows deviant and druggy punk rockers gettin' their kicks LIVE on stage at the now-defunct MABUHAY GARDENS in North Beach --- a suitably cinematic snuff job --- Murder By Guitar! So much more than a trad' Rock Flick, this snapshot of the very early San Francisco Scene is of incalculable historical worth: candid images of punks of the day, caught in extremely zood-out fashion. MRR-PD has poured over film and will present our findings here. Viewer discretion is strongly advised!

PERSON OF INTEREST / ABOUT THE AUTEUR: Director Jon Bastian

Mr. Jon Bastian is certainly no stranger to the worlds of punk and cinema. Moreover, the nether region where these two worlds blur is his very bread'n'butter. Although his professional career in film begins in the early 2000s, the roots of Bastian's film obsession have fandom origins: he picked up his first film projector on the thrifty tip --- at a garage sale.

JB: This is it! I've always wanted something like this. All of a sudden, I had to find a film...So, the guy that sold me the projector says "I've got a film for you. You have to come down and get it." OK. From then on, I started collecting films.

The concept of film collecting seems even more absurd than record collecting...Bastian seems to confirm this, though seems no less enthused by chasing films down with each passing year. Via his early collecting hunts, he came to learn about a local resource that would serve as his entry into professional filmmaking.

JB: I soon found out about this place that has all this stuff already and it's called Film Arts Foundation (FAF). You could get your hands on more of this stuff, but they also make movies there. They're a non-profit that helps people make their own movies --- helps them get financing, ya know? So, I went to work there as an intern and met a bunch of people. Mostly into gear and rentals, but I got to go on low-budget movie shoots, got to hold the boom, all kinds of stuff. In doing this kinda stuff, I got my hands on lots of different things and got to learn lots of little different parts.

Through his work with FAF, Bastian got the skills to be a projectionist (one of his primary film gigs, enabling him to travel for revivals, screen at festivals, etc.) and make his own shorts. In the early 2000s, Bastian launched *The San Francisco Rock'n'Roll Film Festival*, a wonderful one-time fest that he hosted at a now-gone art space on Potrero. This morphed into a regular film series called *Magic Bus*, staged shuffling spots around SF, always with superb Rock'n'Roll film programming. Not Bastian's desired end-game though...

JB: Maybe I should've continued doing it, really made "a thing" out of it. But at the same time, when you work for film festivals, you get so pigeon-holed with your job...You're never able to branch out and it takes a ton of time. Anything you really wanna do, you kinda have to put all of your time into it. That's all you do...

A POONTANG PARTNERSHIP & *PUNK IS*...

Bastian's CRIME fandom has been firmly in place since first hearing the band in the 1990s. His actual entry into their orbit comes via his tenure in THE POONTANG WRANGLERS. Ahhhh, The Wranglers...A brutal and splendid saw/jug/banjo shit-can Americana fuck-off troupe hatched by MICHAEL LUCAS, noble SF punk genius, fabled MRR contributor and life-long champion of all things CRIME (his resemblance to MICKEY TRACTOR on CRIME's *Exalted Masters* album is purely coincidental). The Wranglers often count members of THE BANANAS, THE MUSKRATS, THE OKMONIKS, THE JACK SAINTS and several others in their ranks...but there's a CRIME connection as well: drummer HANK RANK is a proud Wrangler. For decades now, Rank has been much better known as Mr. Henry S. Rosenthal, producer of notable films like *MOD FUCK EXPLOSION, THE DEVIL AND DANIEL JOHNSTON, AUTHOR: THE JT LEROY STORY* and many others. With a life and body of work as interesting as Rosenthal's, a film on CRIME was bound to become a concern at some point.

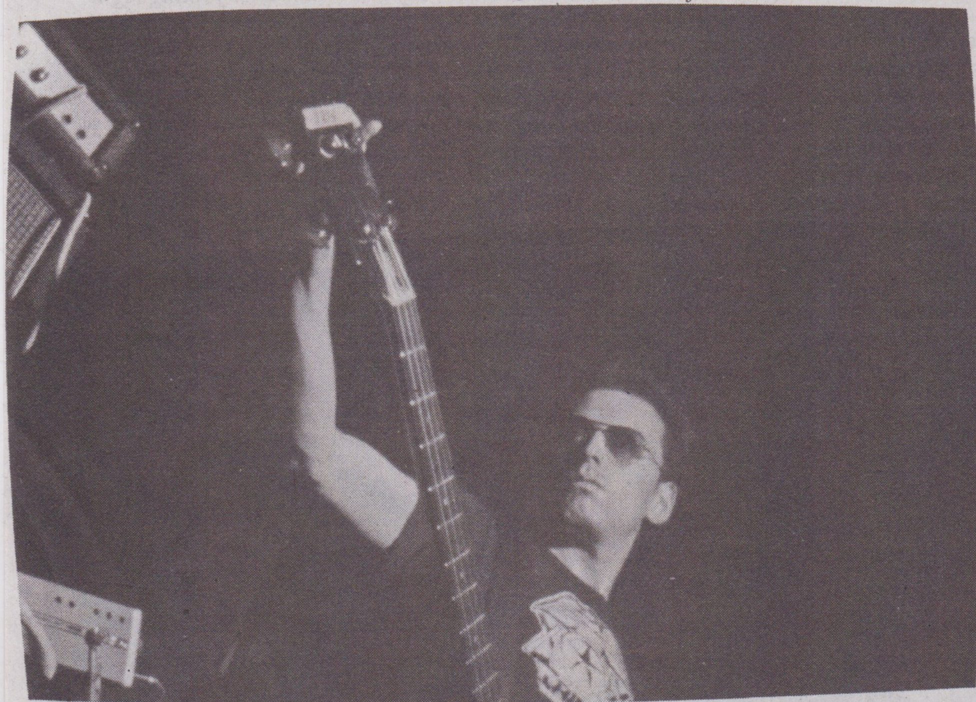
JB: I didn't know Henry personally before joining The Poontang Wranglers. I didn't realize who he was, his story, any of that. I mean, I still didn't really know him after joining right away, haha! But our first connection is Poontang Wranglers! We have a very pure friendship in that way. As soon as I saw THE DEVIL AND DANIEL JOHNSTON, man...It's just hard not to be in awe of Henry, after that. If I could make a music documentary as good as that...Man, I just don't think it's possible. I'd get so many great recommendations from him.

From this point, the chain of events is relatively easy to follow. Film & Punk Buff meets Film & Punk Boss, chats ensue, bonds forged, etc. After a few years of informal chatter, Bastian and Rosenthal agreed to work together some sort of CRIME film project.

JB: It was about 2 and a half years ago now...Summer 2016. In my mind, I'd been pitching a CRIME movie for years before that. "I wanna make a music film, but who do I know? What do I have access to?" Also, rights concerns...and Henry probably had the rights to CRIME. It all kept coming back to CRIME for me. Finally..."Henry, let's make a CRIME movie! Whataya say?!?!?" We're on our way back from a Poontang Wranglers gig...I got him in the van by himself, haha. He says "Well, as it turns out...I've got this footage, but...Yes and No." In short, he has this footage that he'd like to see get assembled and released, but he has no interest in any kind of traditional documentary about the band...It might just be too pretentious at this point. It's not that CRIME is undeserving of a comprehensive doc, it just seems dorky for Henry, for himself."

The footage Rosenthal was mulling over dated back to '78 and came courtesy of a gent by the name of Larry Larson --- a notable cable access personality of the era and locale. In the wide-open early years of cable television, SF area viewers could see Larson's original program, *In Review*, which presented Larson as their man-on-the-street, seeking local SF experience and culture across various walks of life, always with camera in tow. Larson (thankfully) saw that something volatile was bubbling up over on Broadway. Punk first came across Larson's radar via Rank/Rosenthal…

HSR: In 1975, I was an undergrad student at the New College of California, the experimental college that moved from a



warehouse on the Sausalito waterfront when I started there in 1973, to 777 Valencia Street, a mortuary and current home of The Chapel. I read an article in the Chronicle about the dawn of cable TV in San Francisco. Up to that time, TV was free, and the idea of paying for it seemed like a ludicrous plan destined to fail. At the bottom of the article, the concept of Cable Access was described, and when I learned that every cable system was required to have a production studio available to the public. I started planning for my own show. Gathering some friends from New College, I conceived a show that, in retrospect, may have been the birth of reality television. The show was called ***FILES: Things That Are Kept and Why****, and it started production in 1975 on Viacom's Cable Access Channel, and in 1976 was moved to the commercial Cable Access Channel, allowing me to sell and produce ads to finance the show.* ***FILES:TTAKAW*** *was a self-interview program where each week I would introduce a single guest who would do a 22.5 minute monologue on any topic sparked only by their objects (that could be actual files, but anything really) brought into the studio. Larry Larson was the Viacom employee assigned to be the company's point person for my project, and he helped to train us on the equipment and how to stage and direct the show. We became friends during that process. When I joined CRIME in early 1977, Larry was fascinated and quickly organized a group of shooters to start a film project he planned to call* ***PUNK IS….*** *His plan was to start filming CRIME and eventually go on to other bands and turn it into what would have been one of the very first docs of the nascent punk scene in San Francisco. Larry had his own show,* ***In Review****, where he developed his on-air persona as an entertainment reviewer and commentator. I did not have anything to do with that production, but Larry did use some of the CRIME footage he shot to plug the band and some upcoming shows. Outside of those short clips, none of his footage was ever seen by anyone.*

Sadly, it's impossible to imagine a world where *Punk Is…* exists, but the motivation to take on such a project points toward (A) Larson recognizing the juice in punk and (B) his readiness to tackle material that was fresh (if not completely uncodified), dangerously fringe and perhaps quasi-legal at best. Makes you wonder about the guy, ya know?

HSR: Larry was very square and definitely not a part of the punk scene, but he was trying to position himself as a producer, a director, and on-air talent as an entertainment maven. I found his dry delivery very funny, but he took his work seriously. The fact that he put this very sophisticated five-camera shoot together, at his own expense, to begin the PUNK IS… project is a testament to his sincerity and commitment. I would describe him not as a CRIME fan, but curious about what I had gotten myself into based on our working relationship, and I think he smelled a story and had a sense that something important, or at least interesting was going on. There was no further shooting of other bands for the project.

Despite filming CRIME on a few different occasions (1 rehearsal and 2 shows, with audio for 1 show only, no synced sound), all but a small snippet of CRIME aired on *In Review* [VHS transfer of this kernel appears in Bastian's film]. No one quit their day jobs and the rest of the footage simply sat around. Life rolled on for Larson…until it began to look like it wouldn't.

JB: In the 90s, Larry contacted Hank. "Hey, I've got this stuff that we filmed, remember? From way back when. Maybe you could do something with it someday." The deal was that Larson was going into long-term care for a degenerative disease, somewhere down south. Luckily, Larson kept the film and the sound reel from the one show they rolled sound on… That's the absolute solid gold, right there. He gave all that to Henry.

MONSTER PORN AND 3-DIMENSIONAL HOLOGRAM BLOWJOBS: Crime Live @ The Mab, 1978

JB: Henry's all…"Why do you wanna do this?" Ummm, because it's cool as fuck."

Bastian spent the better part of two years sorting through a source material avalanche: 3 multi-angle live performances, unsynced audio, reels of talking-head interviews, a reel or two of backstage shenanigans and various odds'n'ends [including unseen San Quentin Super-8 footage, shot by Mrs. Rosenthal rather than Mr. Target Video!] in the hopes that he could cobble something together that felt authentic and representative of CRIME. Though stunning, Larson's footage wasn't even assembled in skeletal form before hitting Bastian's pad. After tireless assembly, compiling of sources and some really masterful editing, Bastian's directorial vision of CRIME is nothing short of poetic, hilarious, dark, deviant, unruly,

loud and PUNK. It's exceptionally satisfying on every level: artistically, sonically, visually, culturally and criminally.

FRANKIE FIX (from the film): No, I ain't a punk. I'm a pimp. A Rock'n'Roll pimp.

The film opens with the smack of "Feel The Beat", assaulting the viewer with the graffiti that blanketed The Mab (dig those DILS and SEX PISTOLS tags!), terrorizing guitar volume, shaking bodies and an absolutely jaw-dropping staged scene of CRIME stalking The Mab's floor pre-show. Maybe the coolest fuckin' CRIME visual imaginable.

HSR: Larry's vision was always to augment the live show with staged interviews and hijinks like the walking shots. There was no storyboard, no actual plan. He was vamping to think up ideas to flesh the material into an actual film. Some people would call that "B-Roll" but everything that makes it to the screen is "A-Roll" as far as I'm concerned.

The flow from there is pure art: a CRIME live performance interspersed with a barrage of thrilling interstitial imagery. The talking-head soundbites are illuminating, abstract and never trite. There's backstage bumps offa gasoline cards, flashing cross-dressers, fashionable disco folk, luded/lubed punk tomfoolery, pull-tab Colt 45 tall-boy pre-gaming and many cameos from other famed SF bands of the era. Also: monster porn.

JB: YES, the monster porn! <u>Son Of Quasimodo</u>. You see it in the film during "Baby You're So Repulsive". They didn't do it all the time, but CRIME would sometimes bring down the projector to the gig and project the porno while they played "Baby You're So Repulsive". It was a CRIME-only thing, they only did it a handful of times, not a Mab standard or anything like that. I actually didn't know about until I talked to Tony B. (B = Bedard: SF titan, member of ICKY BOYFRIENDS, LEATHER UPPERS, many more greats). He said "Me & Danny Plotnick (wonderful SF filmmaker) went over to Henry's in the 90s and he showed us the 'Baby You're So Repulsive' music video. I'm like "What?!?!?" He said "Yup, it's a porno with Quasimodo. Ask Henry!" And I definitely did! It was the find of a century! It's like...all your favorite things at once. So weird! I betcha buyin' brand new pornos on Super-8 film wasn't cheap back then...

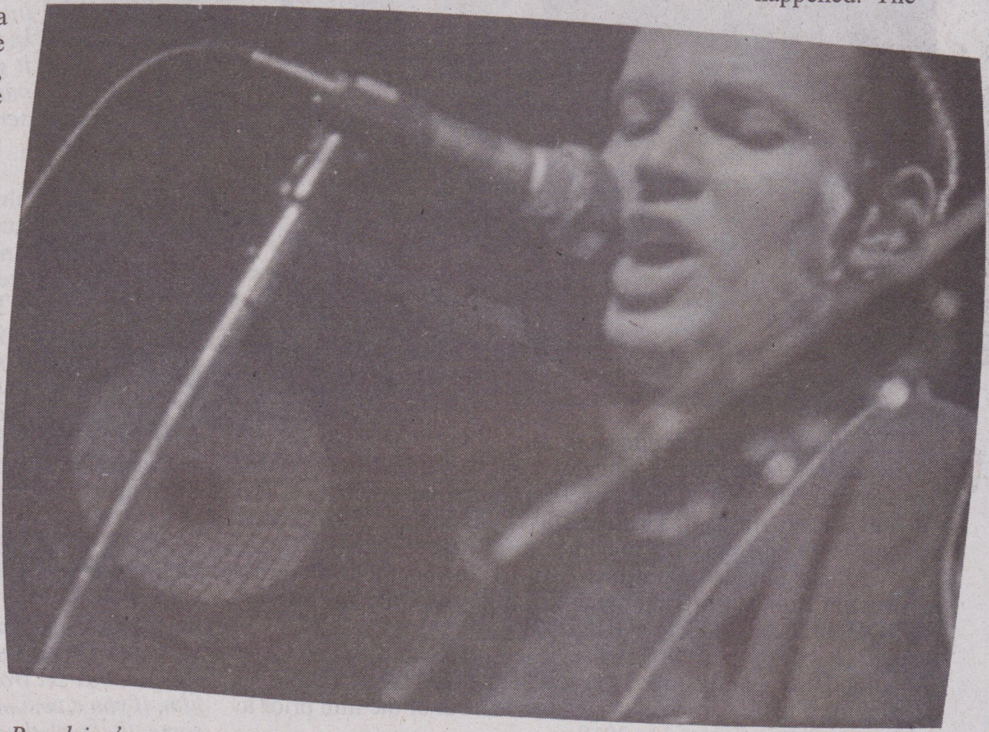
Henry's take is a little more measured...

HSR: Because of my lifelong interest and involvement in film, I was pushing CRIME to expand our stagecraft and integrate other elements. I think I found <u>Son of Quasimodo</u> in a North Beach porn store, found it hilarious, and suggested it as the perfect accompaniment to Frankie Fix's hit "Baby You're So Repulsive." I edited the print to length and we projected it a few times at shows.

Another rather absurdly salacious component of the film is the wonderful use of DIRK DIRKSEN's master of ceremonies schtick. As The Mab's promoter and de facto host, Dirksen's was saddled with the title of (ahem) "Pope Of Punk" ...Though it appears JOHNNY STRIKE simply referred to him as "Dork". Nevertheless, Bastian's positioning of Dirksen as the viewer's tour guide provides the narrative arc of the film, not to mention most of the chuckles. Does the phrase "Piece of ass machine" mean anything to you? It soon will...

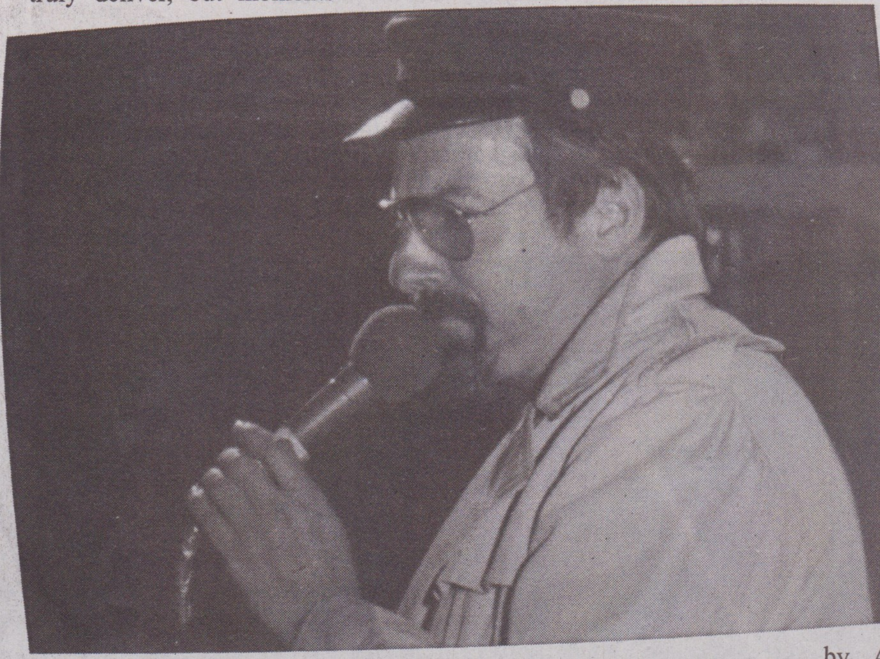
JB: Dirksen saved the film. All that dialogue with Dirksen is from the end of the show. That's him clearing the audience. He's like a true impresario, a true host. Announcing upcoming shows, "There's a man who lost his keys!" All of that is basically him saying "Get the fuck out."

All this helps to position the viewer inside The Mab, which seems like one of the most interesting places on Earth in '78. Bastian's attention not only to CRIME, but the surrounding scene and overall vibe of their world is perhaps the most impressive and significant by-product of the film. It's obvious from the film's initial moments that the short-sighted definitions of punk demographics don't directly apply to what *really* happened. The commitment Bastian places on showing that is so inspiring and affirming. Yes, of course there are blotto leather-clad white punks on dope, but there are also just as many glitzy disco hold-overs, flashy queers, frothing female freaks (NOH MERCY cameo!) and an army of folks from all walks looking for an exciting night out. It's very clear everyone got what they were looking for.



HSR: I was amazed, after revisiting the footage I hadn't seen in forty years, how much of the character of the crowd and the whole milieu was captured on film. This is a very accurate representation of what was going on at that time. The definitions of punk were still being negotiated. You can see that there is no unified "look" to the audience. The ubiquitous safety pins, spiked and colored hair, and punk fashion as we define it today, had not kicked in yet, or rather were just starting. Everything was DIY and homemade, as there were no stores where you could buy readymade punk costumery. It was original, and chaotic and fun, and I think that comes through in the film.

In the end, the performance footage is the key selling point. It's most of the film's meat and it's the best available anywhere, no question about it. Multi-angle, clear and crisp detail with sledgehammer sound. Notwithstanding the classic contributions of BRITTLEY BLACK, JOEY D'KAYE and RICKY TRACTOR, the '78 iteration of CRIME, as shown here, simply can't be denied. Fix and Strike exchange tunes and quite obviously play off each other to carry the set. Rank and Ripper are complete dominators as well, booming throughout…Hank's focus plus Ripper's toughness result in total power. Heavy hits such as "Murder By Guitar" and "Baby You're So Repulsive" truly deliver, but moments



like "Instrumental Instrumental" and "I Knew This Nurse" are bound to elevate impressions of CRIME beyond being noisy bashers. The take of "I Knew This Nurse" is especially killer: gutter-level riffing from Strike over Fix's harmonica pierce, way more up-front than any other take heard previously. Punk, of course, but also proof that CRIME was one hell of a great Rock'n'Roll band. San Francisco's First and Only, in fact.

JOHNNY & RIPPER SOUND OFF

Prior to the premiere at The Roxie, word started to get around that Johnny Strike was too ill to attend the screening. It was even unclear if he managed to see a cut of the film prior to his passing in September 2018.

JB: Johnny DID get to see a cut, thank god! He saw the same cut from the premiere. He was very pleased. One of the main things he said was "Damn…we were the shit. Oh my god. We were the shit." The only complaints he had were "Too much Dork!" Haha, he hated Dirk. Also --- "Too much Ginger!" He thought there was too much GINGER COYOTE too, haha. "Not enough me." He liked the sound…He'd probably never seen any of these shots, all the backstage partying, all that. Ripper's stoked on it too. He really loves the sound.

I contacted Ron The Ripper via an unnamed social media source to gauge his thoughts and impressions on the film. Did he remember Larson and the filming of these shows? Did he think The Mab and SF were represented well in the film? Did he approve of the film?

RIPPER: YES.

FINDING A PATH

HSR: The future of the film is to get it to those who remain, who will remember, and those who are interested and can be inspired by this source material. It didn't dawn on me until after I saw it all put together, but ***San Francisco's First and Only Rock'n'Roll Movie: CRIME 1978 now stands as the best shot, best recorded document of any band at the Mab at that time. The film has already earned its place in history, even though only a handful of people have seen it to date.*** *Distribution plans are being discussed, and we will certainly keep your readers informed as they materialize.*

JB: There are organizations you can enlist that will help find a path for films…They sort of fast-track things toward festivals. When I did this, I wasn't too worried about it getting into festivals or anything. I thought we'd just slam it together and put out a compilation DVD. Screen it a couple times, have a party and then just let the world have it. We did submit it to the SF International Film Festival though…We should know if it makes it by the end of February. If it gets in, great. If it doesn't, oh well…That's punk. If we need to, we'll just have our own screenings. I really just want to have a disc…

The prospect of another CRIME release is almost too tempting to consider at this early stage, but it did prompt investigation into another oft-rumored CRIME project. Many years ago, there was fanzine chatter about a CRIME reissue project that was to be helmed by Revenant, the luxury reissue label operated by JOHN FAHEY, responsible for many superb and meticulously packaged releases by ALBERT AYLER, CAPTAIN BEEFHEART, CHARLIE FEATHERS and many others. Given Revenant's penchant for elaborate presentations, visions of a CRIME box filled many heads. Hank Rank spills the beans…

HSR: I had protracted discussions with Revenant about the ultimate presentation of CRIME, as only Revenant could do. Unfortunately, for a number of reasons, that project never happened. This I can tell you: between the excellent work done by Superior Viaduct with the Murder by Guitar LP, and the CRIME box set from Munster, and now the completion of this film, if you can somehow imagine these all combined, and then some, that was the plan for the Revenant project.

HATE US OR LOVE US, WE DON'T GIVE A FUCK

Bastian and Rosenthal are still making determinations and plans for *SAN FRANCISCO'S FIRST AND ONLY ROCK'N'ROLL MOVIE: CRIME 1978*. There's no website or platform they can direct readers to for updates. The filmmakers seem to collectively feel it would be hokey and unbecoming of CRIME's legacy to force interested parties onto some social media platform for spoon-fed updates. Deductive reasoning and typical sources are probably good places to monitor for CRIME activity. As MRR transitions online, these kinds of updates could theoretically be available there. No promises though…San Francisco's Doomed.

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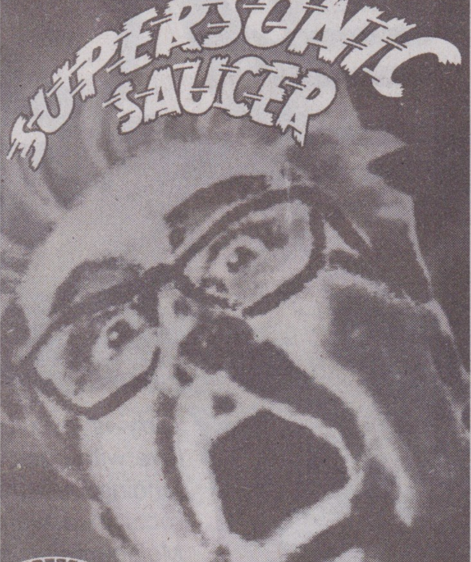

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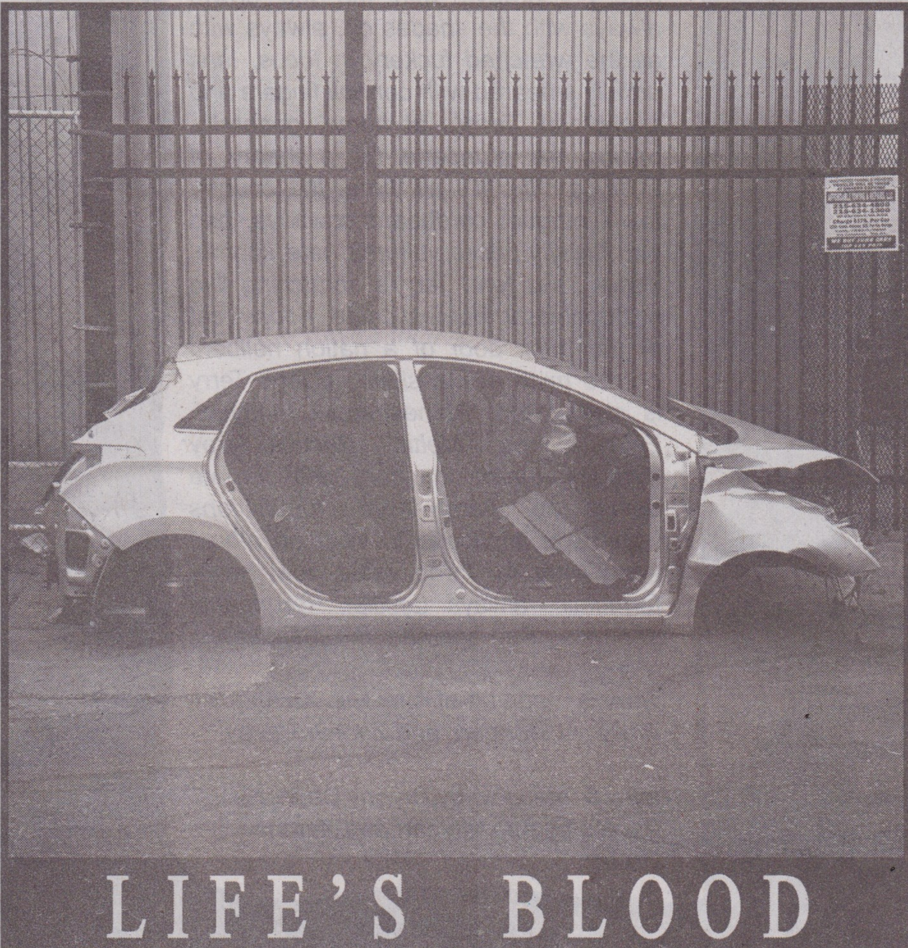

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TALK ABOUT... Terry

Terry is a cult of four. They are all in love with each other, in matching outfits tending evergreen shoots from tangled roots in a warped plastic plant pot on Melbourne's hot, cracked concrete. Terry's got one more spot in the car for you, cruising through the brittle reality of life in a broken colony (what is a working colony?) always with the top down, always with the shades on, always with all the wretched fuckery in focus, lens artfully smeared with cannoli fingers and sunscreen. Terry's at home, generally, mining the mundane for a theory of everyday life. It's all there: the country town intrigue, cardboard cowboys, bad pub, big city, pricks, vultures, hate, shame, denial, and fear. Terry's scratching like a hopelessly domesticated house cat at the back door of a nation hellbent on the myth of classless society; Terry is classy, too. Rhinestones? Matchin'. Four scoops? Meltin'. Results stray from big-theme bangers with ornate details to barely-there ruminations with huge implications. With an album every year for three years now, never formulaic, always familiar, Terrymania abounds. See you on the barricades.

Terry is made up of Amy Hill, Xanthe Waite, Al Montfort, and Zephyr Pavey.

Intro & interview by Bryony Beynon. Photos by Alex Kelaart and Xanthe Waite.

MRR: Terry, what is the worst gig that you have ever played?
Zephyr: We played at a festival once that appeared fairly agreeable from the booker's description and correspondence, but upon turning up at the venue we learnt it was funded by a housing developer. There were even posters advertising two bedroom apartments at the gates. The venue was a nice park where the apartments were going to be built on top of. Also, my cousin couldn't come because he had contracted pink-eye from his children.
Al: We also played a street festival in Melbourne sponsored by real estate agents. We are doing our part. Nah, love every gig with these legends.
Xanthe: Copenhagen in 2016 comes to mind. The gig itself was great—organized by our Danish friends out at Mayhem. But owing to an overabundance of gin and tonics (the only drink available at the bar) and a mere cup of curry each for dinner (many hours earlier) we played the most abstract set of Terry's life. We started some of the songs so fast we had to stop halfway through and other songs turned into Terry medleys because we were all playing different songs at once. It may have been the best set of our lives, but more likely it was the worst. The sound guy, who had apparently been sober for years, told our friend Jakob he thought we sounded cool in soundcheck but he "didn't know what happened." Jakob had to remind him what alcohol does to people.

MRR: I listened to this radio interview Amy and Al did a few years ago and the guy was probing you about lyrics, inferring that it might be dodgy ground to make pop music with "political" lyrics. What do you make of this? A band writing tuneful songs about real things seems to really trip people up.
Zephyr: We do seem to mystify a few of these interviewer types, I reckon they are just hacks who are prospecting for hot content, and figure if we talk about colonialism then they will have made a real cutting edge show sticking it to the man.

Xanthe: I'm surprised about this. I don't think it's such a new concept. What are songs about real things supposed to sound like?
Amy: Interviewers like to ask about this often, it's become a bog standard question, along with where the name Terry came from. I like that there are political themes throughout our music. I like that we can include this kind of narrative in our lyrics while not being too serious and still create a fun pop song for those less lyrically inclined.
Al: Yeah I'm sure Adorno is rolling/skanking in his grave.

MRR: Inference there seems to be that if you're angry, you should be shouting? Or that a song which is catchy is mindless by default. Layla Gibbon called Terry songs "earworms with teeth," which makes a lot more sense to me. That interviewer also called your songwriting methods "a bit bougie sounding" because it involved sitting around at home writing songs together. Presumably this is rather than being a unionized song welder in the riff factory. What are each of your most bourgeois tendencies?
Zephyr: Yes, we got kicked out of the Socialist Songworkers Kollective for writing a song that was solely an attempt to use loads of Latin words that have entered the Australian vernacular; we had no critical framework for this, just cheap humour. So, we are now in the gulag of bourgeois middle class Australian settler heteronormativity; working on songs from our comfortable homes (abundant with indoor plants) in desirable locations after a day's casual work. My most bourgeois tendency is probably that I love posh Euro kitchenware, such as the Le Creuset pan Xanthe recently bought me, the best gift. Al's most bourgeois tendency is perhaps his name Alistair SOME SAINT Montfort III. Regal as, right? Amy and Xanthe are faultless but we all work in the service of the bourgeoisie: Al roasts their coffee, I transport their wine, for many years Amy helped them distress their feature walls and Xanthe helps young art students craft investment items for the rich.
Xanthe: I've been known to pay the inflated price to access a lounge at an airport when on a stopover, in order to have a shower and sit on a relatively more comfortable seat for a few

hours and frequent a snack bar. I enjoy it while stressing over the privileges and pitfalls of the airport experience.

MRR: I am sure that one of you told me the "na na nana na na" was a deliberate troll to find the most annoying refrain, not having a lyric sheet in the latest record means that more than one reviewer I've read has assumed "The Whip" is about BDSM so let's clear that up?

Zephyr: Sorry 'bout that, I love inserts and lyric sheets but not as much as I hate making them.

Al: Terry's got many kinks. The "na na nana na na" is actually trying to emulate an annoying and socially repressive conservative. There are so many productive policy suggestions, based on a wide array of research from academics and community groups. Safe injecting rooms, prison reform and the Uluru statement, all rebutted with a nasally, populist "nah." "The Whip" is the sound of that. "Nah, can't do that mate." "The Whip" is also the name off the anti-independence violent group in (Indonesion author) Pramoedya Ananta Toer's *Buru Quartet.*

Amy: It's fun to sing, too.

MRR: If Terry the composite human were to run for office, what's the platform, what's in the manifesto, what's the strategy for winning over the Australian public, and the perhaps inevitable *Herald Sun* manufactured skeleton-in-closet takedown?

Zephyr: I think most Australians would vote for any party that would remove the legal obligation to vote—if you do not vote here you are fined. So, regardless of giving a shit about that, Terry would use it to get into office. Also, during the campaign, Terry would be a sort of hologram that is the most agreeable person ever, shifting to be whatever someone wants to see but without anyone noticing. Once elected, Terry would tax the fuck out of every rich fucker and liquidate capitalism to fund our grand plan of deporting anyone who has ever voted for the Liberal (conservative) party (unless they happen to be Indigenous) to Manus Island (see ya, Grandad!). Then we would just hand over all power to the Indigenous peoples and suggest they send all of us settler scum to some island already ruined by introduced species for a rigorous reeducation (and bill the Queen for that, of course).

Terry HQ Top Picks

Zephyr

On-the-go snack: Melbourne: tofu Banh Mi. Sydney: Ercyes Eggplant pide. UK: M&S salad.

Item of clothing: Grey 'King Gee' work shirt with 2 pockets, all starch washed out (takes years)

Website: Queers of the Desert at indigoz.com.au/qotd is a great website because it lets you choose the background colour (also cool content) second place goe to kooriweb.org which I would recommend for anyone with an interest in Australia or other shitty colonial situations.

Terry Song: Anything new, or the classics would be "Alfred" or "Start the Tape." I love drumming these, though I usually fuck up "Alfred."

Amy

On-the-go snack: My guilty pleasure is a pack of pre-sliced cheese and crackers.

Item of clothing: My Blues Union jeans bring me endless joy.

Website: Ebay.com.au - where I'm selling all my stuff since I quit my job.

Terry Song: "Third War."

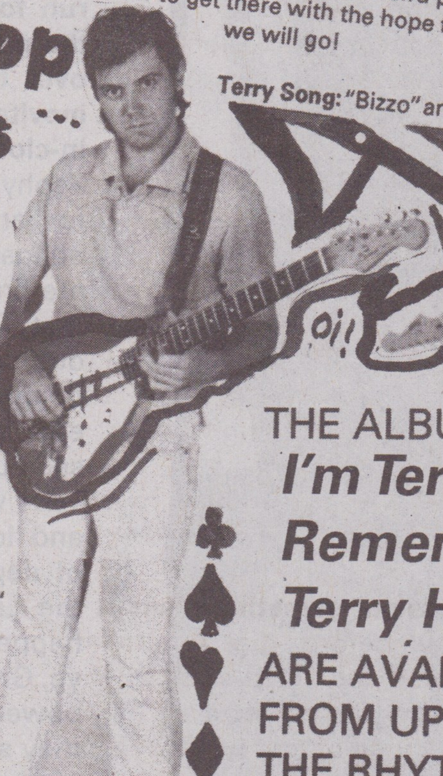
Xanthe

On-the-go snack: Chips

Item of clothing: The Terry tees that Zeph and I hand sewed during a car trip on the last UK tour. As we were sewing these we were listening to a particularly disturbing story about Spade Cooley from the Cocaine and Rhinestones series which Amy introduced us all to.

Website: rome2rio.com - I love planning the next trip and looking up weird places and how to get there with the hope that someday we will go!

Terry Song: "Bizzo" and "Tophat."



Al

On-the-go snack: Samosa

Item of clothing: Swell Maps t-shirt (custom made) or my Sex Pistols "Boredom/nowhere" print slip-on shoes

Website: Seek.com.au

Terry Song: "Bring me the Bomb."

oi!

THE ALBUMS
I'm Terry
Remember Terry
Terry HQ
ARE AVAILABLE FROM UPSET THE RHYTHM AND ALL REPUTABLE DEALERS IN THE UNUSUAL.

Xanthe: Love the idea of the Terry hologram as a manipulative campaign mascot. It'd be like some kind of interactive angel/devil on voters' shoulders that they can't shake, pointing out Peter Dutton's spud-like qualities and the reasons why they should put down the *Herald Sun* and forget everything they have read there.
Al: Our involvement in the recording group Russell Street Bombings would be a great *Herald Sun* front cover on the eve of our success in Kooyong. Takedown. Dobbers. Worms.
Amy: Most politicians are worms.

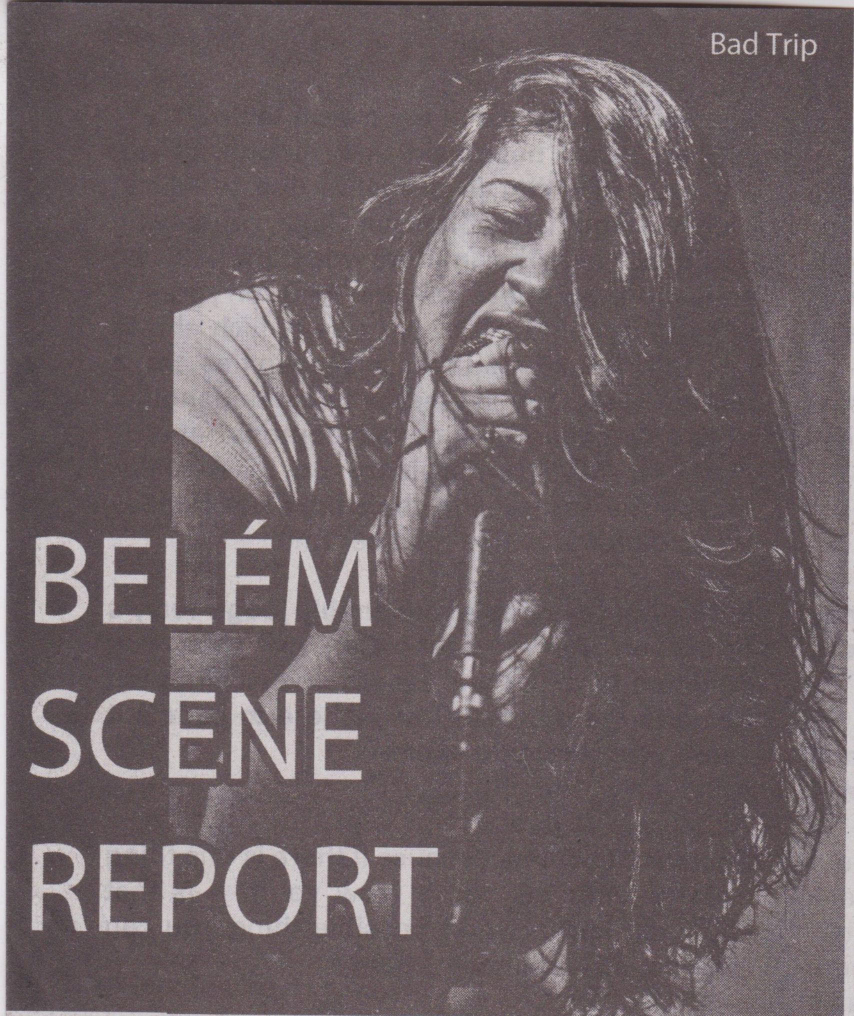
MRR: Is Terry the unit a songwriting democracy though? I've always wanted to compile a mixtape of bands' rejected songs, curated by the dutiful outvoted members who pine for them, because this is always me in any band I am in. What would Terry's entry sound like?
Xanthe: That would be a great mixtape, I'd love to hear that. It's something I think about too. Terry definitely embrace each other's demo offerings and pretty much all of our demos have ended up on the LPs or 7"s. There have been a couple of times where we've had a song without lyrics and one of us will scramble to put something together by a deadline but it turns out as an obviously rushed job next to the more laboured over songs, so we haven't included it. Six months later we re-find the forgotten song and love it.
Zephyr: I often try to veto my own songs or have my voice turned down but these guys just won't give in.
Amy: As Xan said, we tend to use up most of the material brought to the table and never reject songs completely. Some that don't end up being used at the time are recycled down the track. We are still finding uses for a bunch of riffs written for a French surf movie soundtrack that never got off the ground. Endless earwormage.

MRR: One of you said something smart I hadn't thought about before, that Australian masculinity developed as a reaction to the perceived British male archetype of an effete neurotic, as seen in those officer types sent to keep ye olde penal colony under reign. Is there any antidote to both, and if so can you sell this Special Terry Serum at the merch table?
Zephyr: I may have said this, though it's not my idea so credit is probably due to Aileen Moreton Robinson, Ghassan Hage, or Raewyn Connell. I guess the antidote would probably be education, but more suitable as a Terry merch table item could be a shitty hat which shows just how ridiculous those masculinities are: a fucking Napoleon-like hat with corks dangling from the edges and crusty demons, energy drink, or MMA embroidery on it. Actually, maybe the serum is in the song "Hot Heads." We're better at songs than serums.

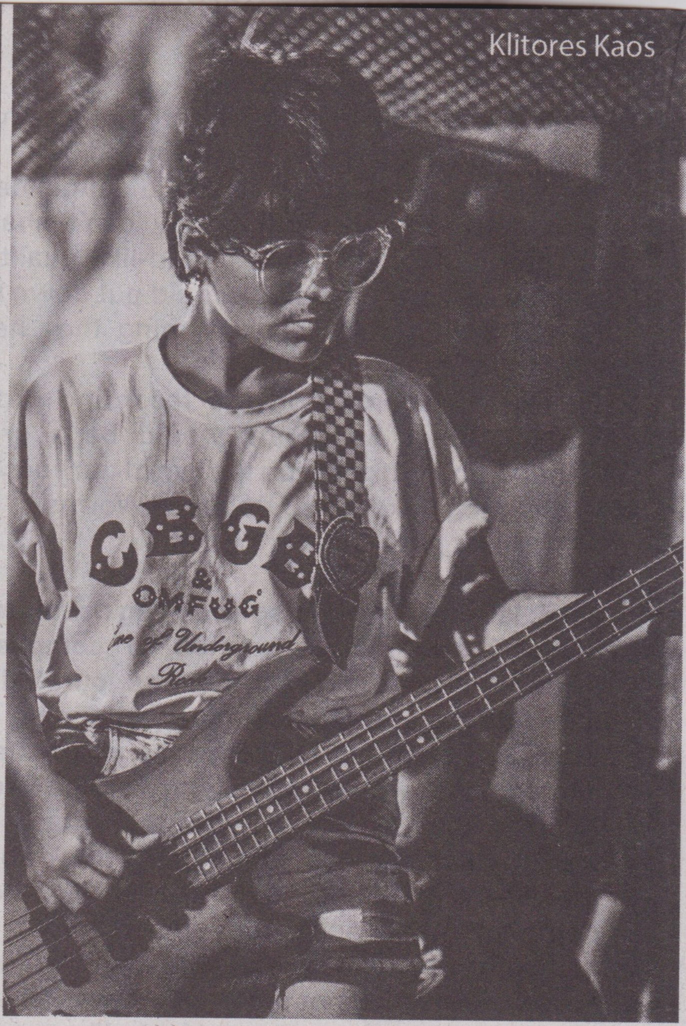
MRR: Can the people reasonably judge Terry's future on Terry's past? Can we trust you continue to make one record a year and then come to the northern hemisphere to peddle it every year until you expire?
Amy: Terry, ride till I die.
Al: Terry is as does.
Zephyr: Of course, because if there is one thing I learnt from my youth crew youth it is that changing is the worst possible thing you can ever do, so I will never change.

Point toward terryhq.bandcamp.com for serums and songs.

BELÉM SCENE REPORT



Bad Trip



Klitores Kaos

Alcoólicos Anônimos

Photos & words by VICTOR PEIXE

Belém is the Capital of Pará, in the Amazon Region of Brazil and remains one of the most important cities in this part of the country, with almost two million inhabitants. As you know, Brazil is a enormous country, and we are almost 2,000 kilometers from São Paulo, for example. The distance and the costs of a long trip somewhat isolate this scene from other regions, an isolation broken by mail in the '80s and '90s and by the internet from the '00s 'til today.

The punk culture started in Belém in the '80s, with INSOLÊNCIA PUBLIKA; nowadays we have a mix of old bands like DELINQUENTES (who have been around for almost forty years), BAIXO CALÃO (more than twenty years) and young bands like BAD TRIP (two years more or less), with increased participation of women and black people over the last few years.

You can hear all kinds of noisy music here: grind and crustcore, punk rock, hardcore, thrash, and crossover are always on the mind.

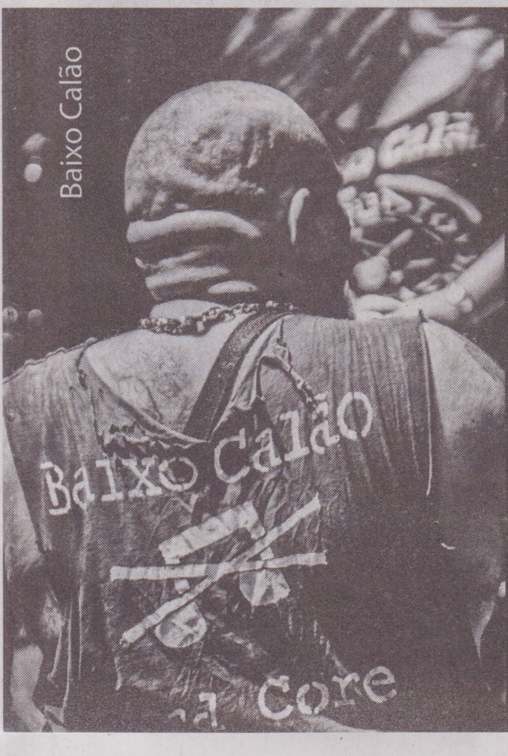
Brazil is in a terrible political moment, with the neonazi Bolsonaro as president and we live in a poor and violent region: the Amazon suffers from agrobusiness, mineral exploration, and dam construction. Making punk alive here is, to me, a way to resist and survive in this context.

Antes do Erro

Antes do Erro

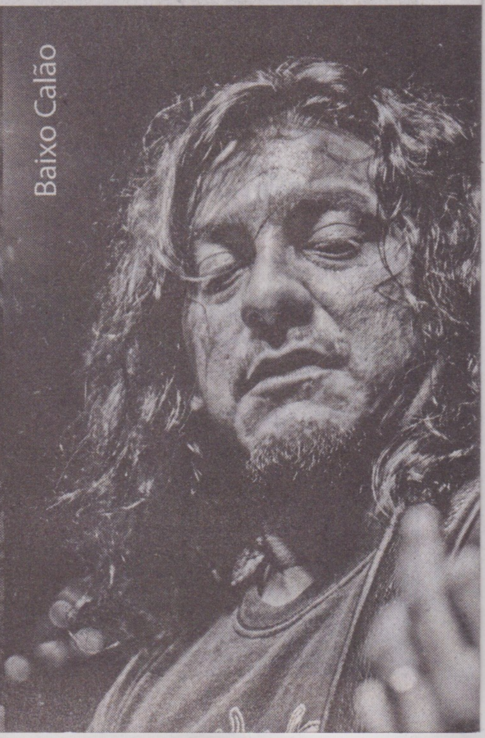
Sokera

Delinquentes and crowd

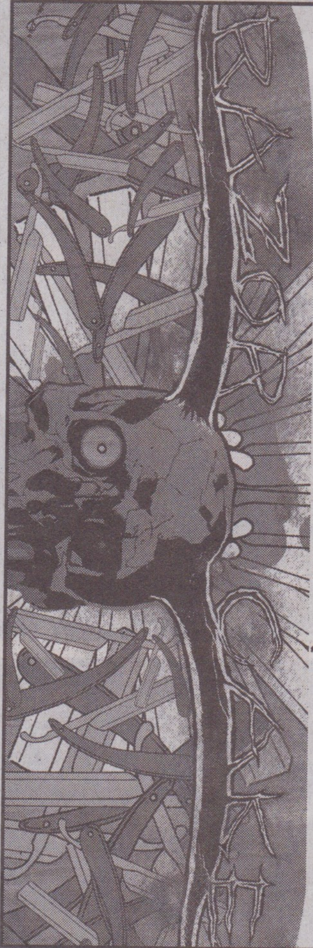


Baixo Calão

Klitores Kaos



Baixo Calão



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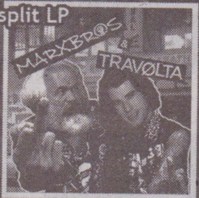

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Ydinaseeton Pohjola

The Finnish hardcore raw punk maniacs of Ydinaseeton Pohjola were interviewed on a super hot summer day at the annual Puntala punk fest just before they played their noisy, distorted, and ear-slaughtering set. Punks outside of Finland can see Ydinaseeton Pohjola on a mini-tour with Tunkio in Ireland in May, and their new split 7" with Tunkio will be out at the same time.

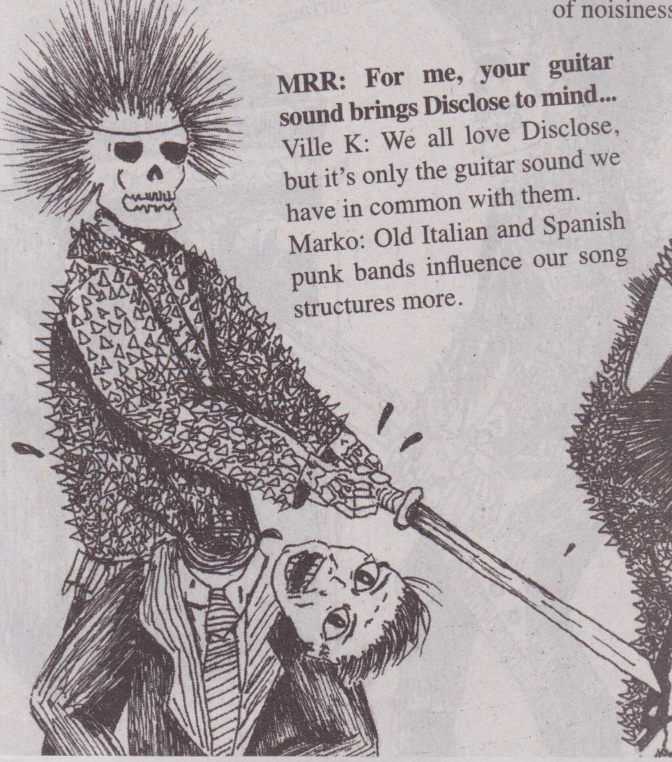
INTERVIEW AND INTRODUCTION BY ARTO HIETIKKO.
PHOTOS PROVIDED BY JOUNI PARKKU

MRR: Your have been a band for over a decade but your style has stayed pretty much the same since the beginning.
Marko: Yes, but we have more distortion pedals now!

MRR: When you first started the band, was it already clear what the style was gonna be?
Ville S: In a way. When we first discussed it before ever rehearsing together we had something much more chaotic and noisy in mind. I remember bands like Ruido de Rabia and Lärm being brought up in our discussions.
Ville K: But the end result didn't sound like Lärm at all, at least in my opinion.

MRR: Have you been happy with your releases? Have you achieved what you set out to do?
Marko: Yes, pretty much. There has always been a certain vision of what the end result should be and we have managed to reach it quite well.
Ville K: The amount of distortion increases all the time. Some other bands get cleaner with time, but we're just beginning to get where we originally wanted to be to in terms of noisiness.

MRR: For me, your guitar sound brings Disclose to mind...
Ville K: We all love Disclose, but it's only the guitar sound we have in common with them.
Marko: Old Italian and Spanish punk bands influence our song structures more.



Ville K: Personally, I'm very influenced by old Finnish HC as well. Because I've listened to that music so much over the years, it's always there in the background of what I do even if I don't mean for it to be. We try to put that sound through a filter though, so we don't just sound like a remake of traditional Finnish hardcore.

MRR: On your LP, your influences show on your choice of cover songs: Bayonet and RIP, old Finnish hardcore, and old Spanish hardcore.
Ville K: On the other hand Confuse and Wretched have also been important bands for me. Whatever we do all these influences are somewhere in our music.

MRR: Are you all exclusively into hardcore punk, or do you listen to other genres of music as well?
Ville S: The genre I listen to the most nowadays might be noise rock, but of course distorted and noisy hardcore punk is an essential part of my musical diet as well. Allu is more into heavy metal, aren't you?
Allu: Yes, I listen to all kinds of metal, though I'm not sure if I'm the one in the band who listens to heavy metal the most.
Marko: I think that would be me.
Ville K: I listen to the Stooges and garage-style rock quite a lot too, and even some dad rock. I also listen to this genre no one else in this band is interested in: crappy Finnish schlager music from the past. I find those records at flea markets, though occasionally they are too much even for my ears. I'm possibly more interested in them as objects than I am interested in the music itself.
Ville S: I listen to all kinds of oddities and curiosities, weird stuff, underground music of different kinds...
Marko: I have always been fascinated by obscure bands from Colombia that are not necessarily very technically capable but that just play and kick ass.

MRR: You haven't played too many gigs over the years. I don't see you live very often.

Ville S: Yeah, especially considering that we've been a band for eleven years. We had a gig in Oulu recently and counted the number of gigs we'd done up to then; it was only 40 in total. This gig today is number 41. Not very often indeed, only a few gigs a year. But the principle is that if we are asked we usually come to play…

Marko: ...but cancel 4/5s of the gigs! [laughter]

Ville S: That's not true any more!

MRR: Do you have any other active bands besides Ydinaseeton Pohjola?

Ville S: Me and Allu play in Cicutoxin, which is a sludge/powerviolence style band with certain hardcore punk elements. The other guys don't have active bands right now I believe. Marko and Allu used to play in Delta Force 2. Is that band showing any signs of life from its grave?

Marko: Possibly some little signs every now and then. We still have some finished and half-finished songs laying around the grave's edge, so perhaps we'll bury them too someday, in an honorable way. Put the final nail in the coffin as it were.

MRR: How are your songs written? Who writes the lyrics?

Marko: Ville S. writes the lyrics and Ville K. and I write the songs. I'm tone deaf, which I see as an advantage because when I try to copy a song I like I'm not capable of properly hearing the fucking chords so the end result is totally different from what I tried to copy. I have always regarded this as advantage.

Ville K: That's not unusual in real musician circles either. Quite a few musicians say that when they start writing a song it's based on some other song, and they just let it develop further. That's nothing special.

Allu: Didn't I write a riff once?

Marko: Yeah, there's a riff you wrote on the newest record.

MRR: What inspires your lyrics?

Ville S: They are inspired by existing Finnish reality. I get ideas from Finnish prose and non-fiction from the 1960s and 1970s. I try to use dated metaphors. Surprisingly, there are often phrases and punchlines which suit current times as well. Criticism of certain unpleasant phenomena like fascism dressed in fine clothes and so on. I intentionally try to avoid being too obvious in my lyrics, though I think everybody understands the meaning anyway.

Marko: I think your lyrics are cynical statements of certain kind. There is no finger pointing; you don't say that something is wrong and that something should be done about it. You are more just stating that everything is going to hell.

MRR: How's the scene in your town of Jyväskylä, Finland? What kind of activity is there at the moment?

Marko: There have been a few gigs in autumn and a few gigs in spring.

MRR: Is it a bit less active than before?

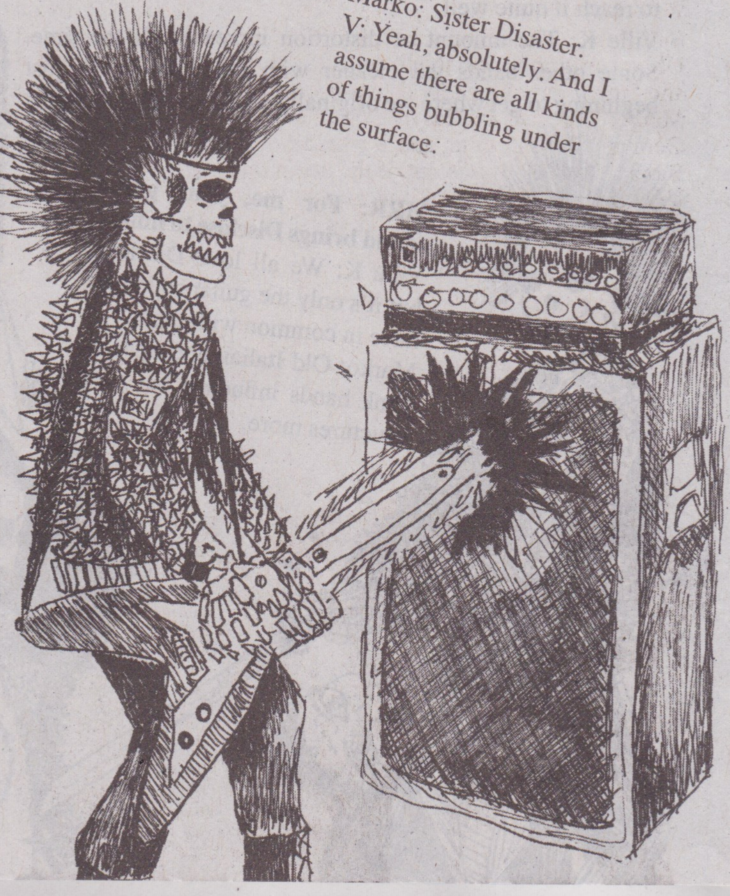
Marko: Perhaps a bit. At one point a few years ago there was a punk or hardcore gig once every month.

Allu: That's what happens when certain active people move away...

Ville S: Yeah, but I wouldn't say the scene is dead or dying. There are still many active people and new bands popping up. I have been organizing gigs and will be doing more in the future as well, and I can count on there being 60–80 people each time. Some other active bands in Jyväskylä include Tunkio, who are a ripping two-man grindcore bomb. There is also a newish crust band called Warfare State. I think the grind band Hävitys is still active too.

Marko: Sister Disaster.

V: Yeah, absolutely. And I assume there are all kinds of things bubbling under the surface.



MRR: People often mention your guitar distortion, but there are also vocals that really reach the listeners' ears through the layers of distortion. I think it's the vocals that separate you from other bands playing a similar style. Did your vocal style come naturally?
Ville S: When we recorded our first 7" the vocals sounded quite chaotic, but I think I have now learned to use my voice much better. You can even hear the lyrics now! Back in the 1990s, when I first got into hardcore punk and starting going to gigs in Helsinki, there were bands like Rytmihäiriö and Amen; I have always liked the kind of hysterical vocals bands like that had. Those types of bands have greatly influenced my vocals. I also feel that my vocal style is natural to this kind of music.

MRR: What are your plans for the future? Will you be staying on the same track or making changes?
Marko: When the day comes when we call it quits we're gonna do a speed metal 7" as our final release. That's how all the good bands of the '80s finished their careers [laughter].
Allu: This apparently means I need to learn to play speed metal too.
Marko: You don't need to—it's enough if you just play clumsy-as-fuck. Rattus, MG-15, Raw Power, the Finnish Massacre—there are loads of bands that made a final speed metal 7"!
Ville K: I have actually proposed, as another alternative, that we buy spandex trousers and start playing post-punk goth pop.
Marko: That's an option, of course. There are lots of alternatives! Like traditional Finnish schlager music.
Ville K: Think of the Riistetyt/Pyhät Nuket thing—post-punk goth pop used to be one possible direction for hardcore bands to go.
Ville S: That genre is a bit more challenging for the vocalist than for the other members, of course. Although I have experience singing Jamppa Tuominen's [ed: a Finnish popular music artist] songs at karaoke. Anyway, back to being serious, for years I have been very satisfied with how everything happens very naturally in this band. It feels good to rehearse and play new songs, and there are just enough releases and gigs coming up. It's nice to always know that there is a recording session or a gig or two coming up. It keeps the spark alive.

MRR: Have you played outside of Finland? Do you want to play outside of the country more?
Ville S.: A few years ago we played a couple of gigs in in the Barcelona area in Spain. It would be great to play a few gigs in the UK at some point, but thanks to our age we all have the normal work and family duties so a lot of arrangements would need to be made.
Marko: It would be easy to do a weekend tour in the UK or in Germany for example, and it would be fun to play in Spain again. But a two-week tour is out of the question for us.
Ville S: It would be awesome to play in Japan. If I played in Japan or the U.S., I'd want to take a few days to do something in addition to playing gigs.
Marko: Personally, I'm interested in Japan as well. But you need more than just a couple of days to play in Japan or the U.S.

MRR: You have a lot of spiked hair and studded jacket on your record covers. Tell us about your aesthetic.
Marko: I'd planned to draw a picture on the EP cover in which Vorkriegsjugend would meet Hullut Koirat by Popeda, but I ran out of time. I ended up coming to the conclusion that I don't know how to draw angry dogs so I should draw crappy skeletons instead. So a crappy skeleton it was!
Ville S: Marko has done most of our covers except the cover for our one-sided LP, which was done by Telsavaara. I've spotted a few good historical photos, which we might use on some of our upcoming releases.
Marko: We have a certain kind of vision of how the records are supposed to sound and look, which makes it difficult to keep on schedule. And when you can't make it in the blink of an eye...

MRR: What do you think about the current political situation both in Finland and the world?
Ville S: I'm not politically active in terms of party politics, but I'm interested in politics. I work in social security and when I see the "accomplishments" of our right wing government, I have to say the results are even worse than I'd imagined even in my darkest dystopian visions. They make totally dumb laws for political reasons, and then pretend to be surprised when they see their effects. The economic policies our government enacts are hardline right wing policies, and on top of that there are even more hardline nationalist ideas and groups present all the time as well. They have unfortunately seemed to gain a lot of support.
Ville K: I consider it as a good thing that the current government, probably totally unintentionally, managed to disrupt the field of right wing populism by making right wing groups fight against each other. It's fun to follow. While Swedish Democrats [a right-wing populist political party] got support of about 20 percent, at least here our own two right wing populist factions' support is very low right now. It's still too high, but not as high as the right wing populists have reached in Sweden. If we try to look at things with positive attitude, it has finally been proven that their political rhetoric is just empty talk, no more than hollow slogans.
Ville S: There's one thing that makes me very sad. I don't know if it's just the people who are loud on social media or if it's true everywhere, but there seems to be a lack of solidarity between people. One could ask what is cause and what is effect, but I believe it's the effect of people pursuing only their own interests and promoting only their most immediate circles. People now seem to lack the capacity to place themselves in another's position. I feel like it used to be more normal in the past to be able to show empathy towards others,

MRR: First the political decision-makers make people's lives miserable and then they manage to get those whose lives are not yet miserable to incriminate those who have difficulties surviving.
Ville S: Precisely. And if you're standing on a step, keep from falling down by keeping those on the lower steps of the ladder below you.

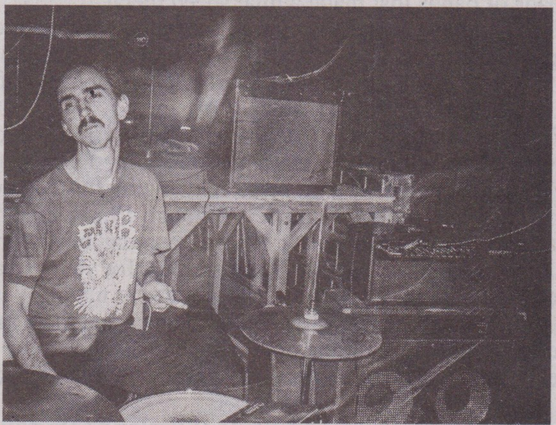
MRR: And things don't look much better elsewhere in the world either.
Ville S: Unfortunately not. That's why, if I'm trying to find something positive in the world, it's really nice to have events like Puntala punk fest, and to be able to play gigs. Underground cultural activities attract me more than ever before. At least here you don't need to argue with people or deal with idiocy.

ydinaseetonpohjola.bandcamp.com

COMPLETERS

The harmony and energy from Felipe Vicente (vocals, guitar, synthesizer), Jonas Dalacorte (guitar), Lucas Richter (bass), and Guilherme Chiarelli Gonçalves (drums, pads) results in the explosive sound of the Completers from Porto Alegre, Brazil. They may sound like just another post-punk band at first, but the experience acquired by its members over the past fifteen years in the Brazilian punk scene makes all the difference, enchanting the people wherever they go. Their lyrics and music are informed by the aesthetics of their personal revolution, sometimes external and sometimes introspective, with a sweet melancholy that attacks social banalization, without ever abandoning the principles of Do It Yourself.

Interview by Guilherme Queiroz de Melo and Mário Fernandes Souza. Photos by Rafael Cruz. Translation by Bruna Richter



MRR: The band was formed in mid-2015, but the first show was in December 2016. That's a long time. What happened during that one year and a half?

Guilherme: That's right, the band started in 2015 as a trio—Lucas, Jonas, and myself. After almost a year Felipe joined the band. During those first months we were just practicing, maturing the band, constructing and deconstructing the songs, looking for an identity for our sound. Although we have played together in other bands and projects, the Completers is something very new for us. We're learning a lot.

Jonas: The initial idea was to play punk rock with influences from Portland post-punk bands like the Wipers. After almost a year, in addition to our own changes, Felipe came in with new ideas and influences, so we started to rework the songs.

Lucas: This change was quite natural. We already wanted to do something new for us from the beginning, but within our musical taste and knowledge. For many years we played in hardcore punk bands. So I think we can say that the motivation to form the Completers was that of venturing into other sounds.

MRR: All the members already have experience in the Brazilian underground scene. What is the advantage of this when setting up a new band?

Felipe: This helps to "shorten some paths," but the challenges are always the same: not many places to play, lack of structure to book tours, sometimes the equipment is not very good, high costs of releasing records, etc. These are things that are getting better over time. The important thing is not to give up, believe in what we create, and look for ways to make it reach other people.

MRR: You are playing in several cities in Brazil and have recently returned from a tour of eleven shows in twelve days, something completely out of our reality. How was this experience?

Guilherme: Tiring!

Felipe: Actually it was amazing and we wanted to keep doing it for many, many days.

Lucas: I love these guys. It was great to be on the road and share those moments with them. It's something we've never done before. We are used to playing multiple shows in a row only on weekends, working around our studies and work schedule.

Felipe: Even big cities like São Paulo have no midweek punk show tradition. We were impressed with the audience that showed up there, the show was sold out on a Monday, even though the venue was small.

Jonas: Just like the first show of the tour, here in Porto Alegre. We hadn't played in town in a while, and it was crowded on a Wednesday while the Varukers were playing on the other side of town.

Guilherme: That show in Belo Horizonte was awesome as well. From behind the

drums I lost sight of the crowd in front of us.

MRR: How has been the response been towards the band with these shows and your two 7" vinyl records?

Felipe: We have heard and read wonderful things since the release of the first single on the internet and cassette. It's amazing to see our music spreading and receiving such positive feedback. It's very rewarding.

Guilherme: I, for one, never imagined that one day my music would be playing at parties in Europe.

Felipe: It's amazing to play at a goth party or share the stage with a black metal band. It's the kind of stuff that we never experienced playing in our other bands.

MRR: Post-punk is a very urban musical style. And urban centers are places where many people live, but at the same time they are very introspective. How does the city, and more specifically Porto Alegre, influence the sound of the band and the feelings that you have and want to express?

Felipe: I remember seeing or reading somewhere a phrase like "I'm surrounded by people, by friends, but it's strange, I've never felt so alone." I think this phrase reflects a lot of the feelings that the city can provide, where everything is immediate, everything must be profitable and healthy relationships are often thrown into the background: first the commitments, then the leisure. Porto Alegre would not be different, although, in itself, it represents the state of non-mutation. I have lived here practically my whole life, and at many times I feel that I have already absorbed everything that the city could give me. The good thing is that it can surprise us at times.

MRR: Do you think there is a revival of post-punk in Brazil?

Jonas: Since the '80s there have been bands of these styles in Brazil, some with more intensity, others with less. People didn't used to care so much about subgenres, and used to call it "Brazilian rock" in the '80s, "alternative rock" in the '90s and "indie" in the '00s.

Felipe: Yes... Nowadays these segmentations of independent rock are better known and publicized.

Guilherme: People began talking about this revival about ten years ago. I've never seen a revival last that long. Personally I think that the numbers of bands of this style have increased, but it was something that never died completely.

Lucas: In my opinion more people gained access or identified with this style and started to go after other similar bands. This happens to us. We are always discovering "new" bands from different times and countries.

MRR: Your lyrics are extremely intimate; they talk to your ego and beg for the silence of time. Where does this introspection lead?

Felipe: Honestly I don't know where this introspection wants to lead, the lyrics are written based on what I feel like putting out at the moment, and several times they are feelings that are part of me for a very brief moments. I think it's interesting to leave it open to the interpretation of whoever listens to it, and the moment in which it is heard.

MRR: The whole world has been alert to the possibility of a right-wing government victory in Brazil's presidential election. And this really happened. What do you expect in the near future? What's it like being punk in this scenario?

Jonas: This is a right-wing government with a nostalgic bias towards the past military dictatorship. They have used more moderate speech after being elected, but it's just for appearances. It represents a setback of all the minor achievements we have had in recent years in the area of social inequality and the fight against prejudice and discrimination against minorities. We cannot expect anything from him or his allies.

Guilherme: He became popular and came to power after the political crisis created by opposition to the PT government (workers party) since 2014, by not accepting the results of that year's elections. It has created an atmosphere of discontent and a false hope of change in all spheres of the population powered by the dissemination of fake news through WhatsApp, YouTube, and Facebook.

Felipe: This is a government that already manipulates before even taking over. And the tendency is to get worse over the next four years, with policies against working class people that benefit entrepreneurs. It's also expected to increase violence, to increase the lack of access to culture and to cut investments in education and technology.

Lucas: It will be difficult times for minorities and all those who fight for respect and freedom. Hate speech and hateful practices have already increased significantly in the country. It's sad and revolting, but at least we have a sense of resistance with people close to us. We know we will not be alone.

MRR: What are the plans for 2019?

Lucas: We are looking for labels to release our full album. We already have ten songs ready to be recorded.

Jonas: And to keep playing in Brazil and, perhaps, in neighboring countries like Uruguay and Argentina.

Guilherme: Maybe a tour in the United States or Europe the album is released?

Felipe: That would be awesome!

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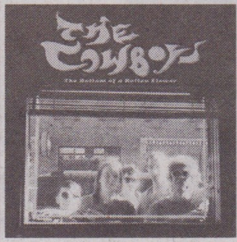
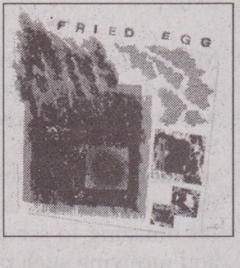


The Cowboys
"The Bottom of a Rotten Flower" LP/CD

Fourth album from Bloomington rock'n'roll heroes! 16 new originals with a killer new two guitar lineup. Executed at the absolute highest level, this album is a must for anyone into garage rock, punk, or powerpop! Some of the best Cowboys material ever committed to tape!

Fried Egg
"Square One"
LP/CS

First full length from Central Virginia hardcore punkers following EPs on Beach Impediment and Negative Jazz. 9 new tracks that are firmly rooted in the golden era HC punk footprint while incorporating elements of discordant rock that could have found a home in the post '83 Touch And Go catalog. Killer!



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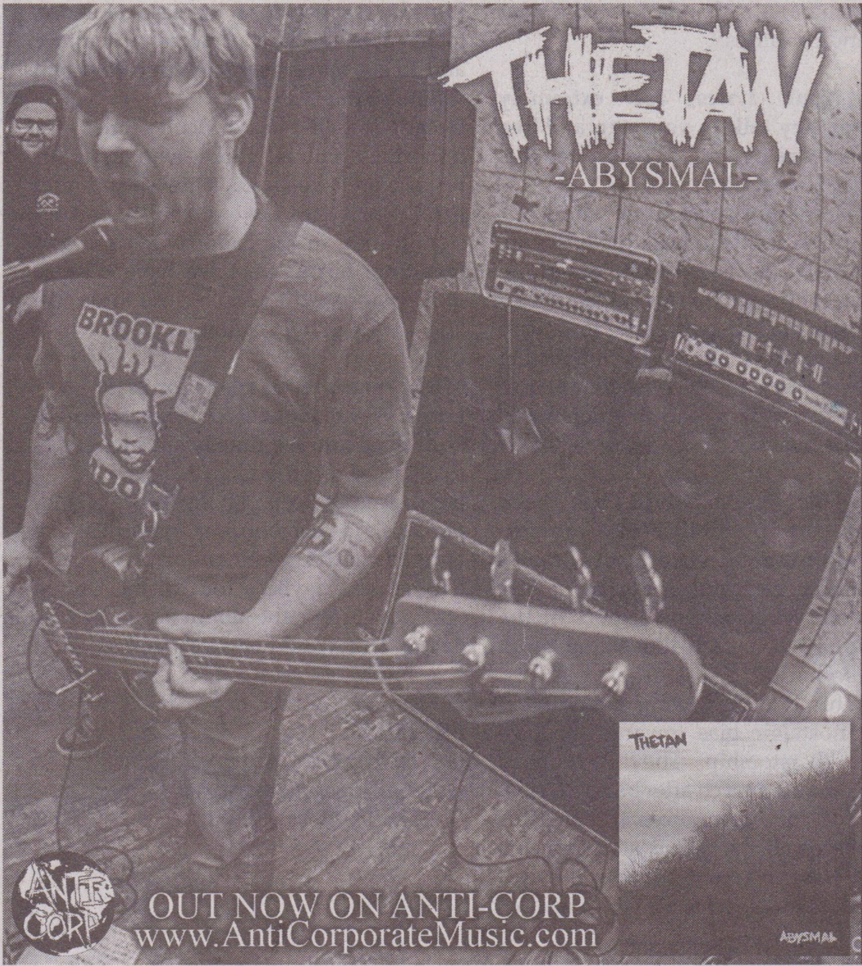

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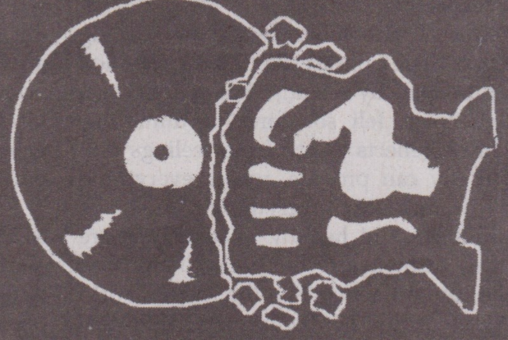

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WEEDRAT

WEEDRAT HAS BEEN RIPPING THE Southwest region since 2015 with sometimes melodic and poppy, sometimes heavy and driving, always lyrically rich punk songs that have earned them an eager-for-more following. In their Albuquerque living room, Greg Yazzie, Becki Jones, and Adrian Burke opened up about growing up in the Navajo communities (Tséhootsooí) Fort Defiance, AZ and Hunters Point, AZ, starting Chapter House, resisting settler colonialism, and fucking shit up.

Interview and introduction by Jessica Mills.
Photos provided by Rob Coons, Darklisted, and Hotvlkuce Harjo.

MRR: How did Weedrat start?
Greg: This lineup started in 2015 but the idea started in October 2014 because we were going to play Indie Electro Fest in Shiprock, New Mexico. In past years, we rotated band members and played as a country and stoner metal band. Then in 2014, we came up with the idea of Becki being the front person of the band. I think that's how the idea started, but this actual incarnation of Weedrat started in 2015.

MRR: What's Indie Electro?
Greg: It's a two-day DIY festival in Shiprock, New Mexico put on by Brad Charles (formerly of DISCOTAYS) that happens every year during the Northern Navajo Nation Fair.

MRR: You mentioned different bands. Were different people involved in those, or was it always the three of you?
Greg: It was with different people; we performed in a lot of them with Allen Augustine from Lilith. Then we brought Becki in and Adrian.
Becki: It was Midnight Stew first. Right?

Greg: It was Smoke Mountain first, then Midnight Stew. But before we had other projects going. We were a stoner doom band for a bit and then a country-ish band. It was supposed to be country, but it wasn't.

MRR: So what was it then? If it was supposed to be country, but it wasn't?
Becki: Stoner country.

MRR: You took the words right out of my mouth. I was gonna ask that. Weed country. Weedrat. Where did Weedrat come from then?
Greg: I think Allen might have come up with it. We were goofing around in a group message and coming up with different names, but that's the one that stuck out the most.

MRR: So, the festival was in Shiprock. Are you all from Shiprock also?
Becki: We're all from (Tséhootsooí) Fort Defiance, AZ and Hunters Point, AZ near (Tséghához dzání) Window Rock, Arizona.

MRR: So you've all known each other since high school? Window Rock High School?
Becki: Yeah. They have known each other longer. I started dating Greg when I was sixteen, and then that's how I got to know Adrian, and then we went to Warped Tour a couple of times.

MRR: Where?
Becki: Phoenix. I ran away.

MRR: You ran away to go to Warped Tour? And then you played in a country band? A stoner country band?
Becki: It was 2003, come on! Warped was good back then.

MRR: Greg and Adrian, Becki said that she met you guys later, but you two had already known each other?
Adrian: Yeah, we started hanging out in middle school. 2001? No, wait. When did 9/11 happen?
Greg: 2001. You're not supposed to forget.
Adrian: So two years before, in 1999. 9/11 happened when I was a freshman.

MRR: You've described a little bit about how your sound has evolved from stoner country to now. What would you consider your sound now?
Becki: Stoner pop punk.
Greg: I don't know about that.
Becki: No? I mean, we're on the punk spectrum.

MRR: In my experience as a fan, I have noticed your direction getting a lot heavier.
Greg: It's definitely gotten heavier for sure.

MRR: Is that intentional?
Greg: I think it's just what came out. We pumped those songs out really quickly. It's what we were feeling at the time. We were angry. We're still angry.
Adrian: It's not technically heavy; it's just power chord heavy. I don't know how to describe it.

MRR: So you started together with this iteration in 2015. When did you record your first Weedrat songs?
Adrian: That summer.
Greg: We did it really quick because we were like, "Yeah, if we record, we can get shows a lot quicker."
Adrian: Like ten songs in two hours.

MRR: Did that work? Were you able to get more shows then after you recorded? And where was your first show?
Greg: Yeah, it was really quick afterward.
Adrian: Oh, we played Isaac's house. That was before we even recorded anything. That was the first show with me in the band.

MRR: Here in Albuquerque?
Greg: Yeah, it was a house show here.

MRR: Since that first show and first recordings, what releases have come out?
Greg: We put out *The Rat Cometh* the following year. We recorded like eleven songs and just selected what we wanted for *The Rat Cometh* and then put the rest of them out on bandcamp as a separate release called *Besides* (b-sides). We did CD-Rs and tapes.
Becki: Greg does all the graphic design.
Greg: Allen does too.
Becki: Allen has done some. Ryan Singer has done some designs for us, too.

MRR: So, what out of town gigs have you played? I know that you've played a lot here in Albuquerque.
Adrian: Santa Fe.
Greg: It's been more regional.
Adrian: Nothing east. Just over the summer we did some out of town shows. Portland first, then Seattle, and then into California where we played The Multiverse is Illuminated festival and a show at 1-2-3-4 Go! Records.

MRR: When was that Portland show?
Becki: August 2018.

MRR: The Seattle show was that same trip?
Greg: Yeah.
Becki: We played The Henry. It's a museum at the college. It's an art gallery. And then we played with Nizhoni Girls and Black Belt Eagle Scout.

MRR: It's a little unusual for punk bands to be playing at an art museum gallery. What was the show?
Becki: Demian DinéYazhi´ had a... what do you call it? They had an installation there. They do R.I.S.E.—Radical Indigenous Survivance and Empowerment. They are a queer Diné artist, poet, and activist. But they had an installation up and organized the whole event. We did a Portland show the previous year for their installation. What was that place called? The TBA Fest, yeah.
Greg: Time Based Art Festival at PIGA, the Portland Institute for Great Art.

MRR: Is that an indigenous peoples' art festival because the bands that you mentioned, Nizhoni Girls and Black Belt Eagle Scout...
Becki: The one at the Henry was all indigenous.

MRR: How did you get connected to them?
Becki: I think I bought one of their shirts and then we started talking.
Adrian: I know they did tour through the Tannex. That was like them and some other poet. And, we opened that show at the Tannex. I think Marya had us, and then they did their poetry or vice versa because I know we did that show when it was like kind of wintery and then another was in the summer as well.
Becki: We hooked up with them through the Tannex with Marya. Me and Demian just hit it off.

MRR: And then, as a result of hitting it off there at the Tannex show, they asked you to go out to Portland and Seattle and play those festivals?
Becki: Yeah, they're a real huge supporter of ours. We might be playing with them next week over at the Tannex again.

MRR: What's your experience been like to travel such a far distance to do these one off shows?
Becki: It's fun!
Adrian: The shows weren't all loaded with bands and stuff. There are bands, yes. But there's also poets and just a bunch of other art media. It's really cool. I'd rather be doing that than just play a stacked bill with band after band after band.

MRR: In terms of audience, previously you said you mostly play here, regionally, so are there any big differences you notice among the different venues? Are your audiences different here in Albuquerque and regionally versus out of the Southwest region?
Greg: I think people are more accustomed to seeing a brown band here. Other places, they're like, "Whoa, you guys are all native?"
Becki: They tend to look at us and be like, "Whoa, you're all indigenous." It's cool because we'll run into a few indigenous folks in Portland or Seattle. There's always a Navajo somewhere, so it's nice to talk to them. It's just like, "Oh hey, you're native? You're Navajo too? That's awesome." And so that's always nice, running into relatives in different area codes. Just kidding! They don't see a lot of Navajos and natives like we do here in New Mexico or Albuquerque. So even just having just a short conversation and talking to them, there's a lot of warmth there, there's a connection. It's cool. Sometimes people start talking to us about the issues we talk about.

MRR: What issues does Weedrat talk about?
Becki: One of my songs is called "Her," where I talk about sex trafficking and stuff like that. Or we talk about the land

extraction that happens here, or about how high sex trafficking is due to environmental injustice. So they'll talk to me and let me know what's happening in their community with their territories and their nations.

MRR: Are there similar struggles going on even though their communities, territories, and nations are culturally different from yours?
Becki: Yeah. What they're specifically fighting for is different. When we're in Portland or Seattle, it's their fish, it's their rivers. And we don't experience that here. We're in the desert, and we don't really eat fish like they do. That's not our ancestral food. So seeing them and their struggle for their ancestral foods is definitely really interesting to me just because their settler colonialism is a little different from our settler colonialism.

MRR: But the root of the problems are the same?
Becki: Yeah. Settler colonialism.

MRR: What are people in Navajo Nation fighting for?
Becki: Air. People. I mean, it's the same thing for them in the Northwest, too, because they're getting their land extracted as well, but their ancestral foods and the foods that they eat are the fish. I mean, our ancestral food is threatened by environmental injustice, too. We had the gold mine spill, and our air quality threatened. Our animals are getting messed up. Shit's fucked up.

MRR: Since we're talking about issues you get asked about, when you do play regionally, outside of Albuquerque, I've noticed sometimes when I see your events being promoted, the flyers say "Chapter House presents." Can you talk a little bit about what that is? Is it a DIY show promotion? What is Chapter House?
Greg: Chapter House today is more of a traveling native music showcase. It promotes indigenous bands from the southwest and from in and around the Navajo reservation. So in simple terms, it's a traveling showcase that moves around the southwest. Within the past year we found our niche in when and where to put on shows. It's something I started to help grow the native music scene outside of the reservation.

MRR: When did you start Chapter House?
Greg: The idea started around 2012 but didn't really kick into effect until 2014. That's when we started taking music a bit more seriously. The name came from a house that we used to live in behind Dunkin Donuts; it refers to Chapter Houses from the Navajo Nation. Chapter Houses are typically used for holding community meetings between local community members and their Navajo Nation council delegate. The name itself is all a reference to Navajo culture.

MRR: Here in Albuquerque?
Greg: Yeah. The show aspect of this started in 2014. Before that, it was a lot of making fake stuff.

MRR: Fake stuff?
Greg: It goes back to the Indie Electro. Me and Allen would make up fake bands just to do one-off shows. We would actually make music, upload it to SoundCloud, and "release" it under a made-up name. We would also print patches and shirts to go along with the façade of a band being real. I think for the most part we did it to make each other laugh but then people got into it and then the joke was over. We then started making actual music with a purpose.

For the one-off bands we'd think, like, what if this kind of band existed on the reservation? What if there was a Navajo stoner metal band? Because there's nothing really out there like that. So we'd come up with these ideas and we'd perform under a moniker and have a theme. One year, we did a stoner metal band, the next year we did the country band, the next year we did Weedrat, and we'd make all this fake media for it. But then all of a sudden, that turned into us actually writing real songs and asking ourselves, "What if this could actually become a real thing? What if we kept on doing this?"

With the Chapter House, we decided to bring in actual bands that were actually already doing this, but didn't have as much of a grasp on venues outside of the reservations. That was how I wanted to do it — bring Native bands from the reservation out and expose them to bigger audiences.

MRR: What bands?
Greg: It started out with Allen's band Lilith, The Flossies, Weedrat, Ryan Dennison, Becki's solo material Sing Down the Moon, Plantagent Cherokeee, and at the time our country band Midnight Stew. Discotays was also one of them at one point because they were doing something similar. The idea was to inspire kids that would come to our shows to start their own bands.

MRR: Speaking of which, I know in the past you have gone home with instruments and equipment

to do workshops with kids. Can you talk about how that started? Are you still doing it?

Greg: There's an organization out in Window Rock called Native American Music Fund.

Becki: They provide a one-day once-a-month workshop.

Greg: Basically, they get musicians to teach younger musicians the basics. And at the end of the workshop, they present the kids with the instruments to practice on for the next month, so they would keep on coming back and hopefully the learning impact would continue the whole month. But it was a little difficult, honestly.

Becki: When we went, it was kind of weird, and it's run by a white lady, so…

MRR: You've got to be kidding me.

Becki: Yeah, not kidding. It's kind of like white saviorism complex. But we were happy to be there, and the kids were awesome. We got stuck with the little, little kids and they were so cute. But we only got to be with them for like an hour and then after that, it was all the adults on stage jamming for two hours or something. So Weedrat played for 30 minutes and then it was a jam sesh for all the other adults for like an hour and a half. I did have a little girl come up to me and say, "I didn't know you were a rock star" then she hugged me and asked if she could sit by me. She sat next to me the whole time we were there. This really proved to me that representation is important.

MRR: All white adults?

Becki: No, it was some natives, but the main person who heads it is a white lady.

MRR: How does that happen?

Becki: I don't know. She organizes new age stuff over there, too. It's gross.

MRR: You mentioned previously when talking about Indie Electro and putting together the fake stuff, you said, "Oh, what would it be like to have this band on the reservation because there aren't any?" What of music and bands are there already?

Greg: Metal is really huge out there. I guess metal would be one of them. It's a pretty big staple in the reservation. Also, hip hop music in general has gotten pretty big due to the SoundCloud audience. But of course you can't forget about the country scene. The older crowd keeps that scene going strong, and slowly one by one the younger generation falls into it. But luckily, festivals like the Indie Electro have been nourishing newer and experimental musicians to push native music in a more progressive and experimental direction.

MRR: You guys are in your 30s, so is that what you grew up listening to? Metal, country, and hip hop?

Becki: Mm-hmm.

Greg: That stuff was ingrained from birth but I listened to a lot of punk growing up. I was really a skate punk at the time. I really liked listening to those Epitaph compilation CDs when they were coming out with the *Punkorama* comps. They were super affordable and there was a variety. That was the first big punk record label I got into.

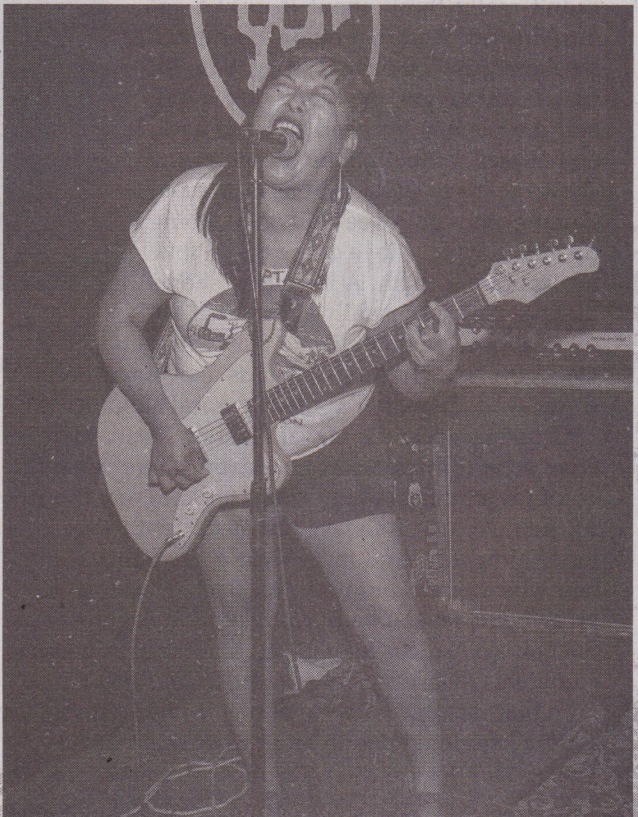
Adrian: Pretty much the same stuff, but then my brother also was really into the new wavy stuff like the Cure, Joy Division, New Order. He's got a really huge industrial collection, too. He swayed me into trying to listen to different stuff and actually try to get it. But once I got a guitar, I could actually feel the notes out and map out what they were doing through hearing it and just trying to find out stuff like that, listening to whatever I could get my hands on at the time. And then, just kind of getting those Guitar World books. Those are just all blues scales and a bunch of fundamental stuff, but I never really touched that. I got my first guitar when I was thirteen. First electric guitar, I think.

"We're ultimately doing this for indigenous folx and POC, people who understand where we're coming from... We don't want to do the whole "native" thing... we ain't about that WHITE GAZE!"

MRR: How old were you when you started playing your instruments?

Greg: I started by playing bass. I had an acoustic before though.

Becki: Yeah, you played acoustic too.



"I just want to fuck shit up and yell at people and talk about hetero-patriarchy, talk about indigenous feminism, and talk about

Greg: Technically, I started out with an acoustic. I was around 11 or 12. I got a cracked acoustic guitar from a flea market in Shiprock, NM. I just fiddled around with it.

Becki: I played violin in third grade until high school. We had orchestra class over at Wind Rock High School. But it was the first year that it started and so it didn't really pop off because everybody was a beginner. The teacher didn't even know how to play either. It was horrible. So, it wasn't great. But, I played piano in middle school in Fort Defiance, and I played that pretty well. And that was about it.

MRR: Where do you see the intersection of your activism with your music? I know that Becki works for Planned Parenthood of the Rocky Mountains. Do you want to talk about your new position and how that intersects with your music?

Becki: I recently got promoted to Program Manager, Sexual Health Educator with Planned Parenthood. And my program is going to be a Community Health Worker Program for indigenous communities in urban settings and reservations. Basically providing resources, lessons, curriculum for indigenous folks, because when I was growing up on the rez, I didn't get any sex ed in middle or high school. I didn't really think about it until I got into this job. And that made me think a lot about growing up and being thankful that I didn't get pregnant! My work and me playing go hand in hand a lot. Sometimes, I'll be tabling at one of the shows that I'm playing at as a Planned Parenthood employee and then going up and playing. I love doing that. I love incorporating them. A lot of the shows that we play are usually shows that we think about. We don't like to play with bands that we know are abusers or bands that have been shitty. And if we do, I'm usually vocal about it.

Growing up in the Navajo Nation, yeah, there were a lot of bands and music, but there wasn't a lot of representation from femmes or from women. And so I always just never got to see a lot of girls play. And there were a few bands that had women in it, but never all women and never on an equal level. There was a lot of misogyny on the Navajo Nation; a lot of the punk music in the scene was also very misogynistic. So, I grew up with that misogyny inside of me. It wasn't until I started hanging out with Litter Brain and Liza, my coworker now, not my boss anymore, that's when I broke out of it and recognized that it's really awesome hanging out with women. It was not awesome recognizing that I was a misogynist, kind of shitty towards women and just wanted to be one of the guys.

MRR: Misogyny is a system, and so as women, we internalize that to survive in that system.

Becki: It is. it's a defense mechanism, too. Growing up, that's how old my whole family was. We're very patriarchal, and it was shitty because with our traditions, we're supposed to be matriarchal, but I never felt that sisterhood too much back home. However, when I look at who holds the decision making in the family, it's the women.

MRR: And is that, in your opinion, a direct result of settler colonialism?

Becki: Oh yeah, for sure. Yeah. It mirrors the main society; our reservation mirrors a lot of what's socially acceptable, and so fighting that and fighting against that, we're fighting for our old ancestral ways. Being in this band is really important because there are a lot of girls who come to me and say, "Oh, it's awesome. It's awesome that you're doing this. I've never seen like a girl play guitar or scream like that before." That's why I keep doing this. It's because it's so important to me because I didn't have this when I was growing up, just like we didn't have awesome people who were a good influence, pushing music on young people, like Chapter House. And Greg recently did organize a show at Navajo Nation this past Saturday at the museum. It was a good event, and it was really thoughtful, and we had a lot of young people come out. I always yell at them to start a band, especially the girls, because I think it's super important. But other than that, Weedrat is kind of like...I guess technically, we're not that great, but what I'd like to get out is the message and being in a punk band. I've always wanted to be in punk bands since high school. And screaming especially has always been really appealing to me. And doing this has been really awesome.

And it's just fucking shit up. I just want to fuck shit up and yell at people and talk about hetero-patriarchy, talk about indigenous feminism, and talk about reproductive justice, and this is a great way to shed light on what people wouldn't already know because a lot of indigenous struggles aren't put through mainstream media. And so this is just one outlet for us. Although, our songs are not traditional, and we're not a traditional Diné band, this is something that is from where we grew up and how we grew up. I've always

reproductive justice, and this is a great way to shed light... because a lot of indigenous struggles aren't put through mainstream media."

been angry, and punk music was such a great outlet for me in my youth. That anger can get transcribed into music, and it's such a release for me, especially for me to yell at white people. We're ultimately doing this for indigenous folx and POC, people who understand where we're coming from. I think that's why we don't want to do the whole "native" thing, it can be gimmicky and ultimately for the white gaze, and we ain't about that WHITE GAZE!

MRR: Is traditional indigenous music something that you grew up around in addition to the metal, hip hop, and country that you mentioned before?

Becki: Yeah, my Cheii [grandfather] would listen to peyote like pop music.

MRR: Do you ever perform Weedrat songs in your native language?

Becki: No, but maybe in the future. Maybe one of these guys can do it. Adrian could do it.

Adrian: That'd be awesome.

MRR: Just to bring it back full circle to what we started talking about, Greg, I think it was you who said something like, "Then, we wanted to bring Rebecca in to front the band." What was your thought process there?

Greg: Just to mix things up. There aren't many female-fronted bands on/from the rez.

Becki: At that time, I was just messing around on the bass and I dunno, that's when I really started playing guitar and stuff.

MRR: What year did you start playing guitar?

Becki: 2015 or 2014. I joined Litter Brain first, and then we started doing Weedrat stuff. Then Nizhóní Girls, then Cat Teeth. I'm down to just two bands right now, Nizhoni Girls and Weedrat. And I've always had my solo stuff, which is me messing around on a loop. Sing Down the Moon.

MRR: Greg and Adrian, other musical projects for you or is Weedrat it?

Adrian: Just Weedrat.

Greg: I'm also playing drums for the Dimensions, which includes Ryan Dennison.

MRR: Anything that you would like to mention or have in print for an international punk audience?

Becki: Holy shit. Oh, I also organized Asdzáá Warrior Fest, with Liz, Lisa, Keioshiah, Sherri, and Cheyenne. So, it's a festival where all bands have to have half women/femmes, and/or queer people. And we do this once every summer. So far we've had two of them.

MRR: Where is it held?

Becki: We've had it at Window Rock, at the K'e Info Shop. We wanted to have a festival to empower our Diné Asdzáán (Navajo Women), because we have such high rates of domestic violence and sexual violence in our communities, higher than any other race or ethnicity in the U.S. We also lack the representation of women in our music scene in Dinétah (homeland) as far as bands go. We wanted to have a festival that would inspire other young women/femmes in the community to start bands, or start MCing, or doing something creative.

MRR: Do you see this violence as a direct result of settler colonialism?

Becki: Yes, for sure. Missing and murdered indigenous women, we experienced that, we feel that. And so Brad, who organizes Indie Electro Fest, kind of brought this idea up, and then me, Liz, and Lisa were like, "Oh, cool." He didn't want to do it because he identifies as a man. So he thought, "I don't want to do this." So he threw it towards us, and then we're like, "Yeah, let's do it." The first year was awesome at the K'e Info Shop. We had a lot of speakers. It was a full day festival. We had free food. That turned out very well. And then we had one recently at Counselor, New Mexico. The first year was in Window Rock, Arizona. That's our capital of the Navajo Nation. So we decided to move it to each Agency, so different areas on the Navajo Nation. And so this past year, we had it in Counselor, New Mexico, which is our Eastern Agency.

MRR: What's an Agency?

Becki: Just an area. So like Eastern, Western, Central, because we have the largest reservation here. And so it's huge. In Eastern Agency, which is the 550 Road towards Farmington, they experience a lot of fracking. And so, with this year's festival, we focused more on environmental justice. Cheyenne Antonia does a lot of social justice work in that area, specifically around fracking. That's her community, but we wanted to have it in that area. But, I think we're just sticking to Navajo Nation because we're Navajo. Next year, we're thinking of having it in either Monument Valley in Arizona, which is Western Agency, or in the city.

MRR: Okay, I don't wanna make you late. Aren't you heading off to a photo shoot for Nizhóní Girls? Do you want to give one last blurb about that?

Becki: Nizhóní Girls is a three-piece band. Two of us are Diné and our drummer is Laguna Pueblo. We are desert surf and we're awesome!

MRR: What does Nizhóní mean?

Becki: Beautiful.

MRR: Beautiful Girls.

Becki: *Ahe'hee' shíkis doo shí Diné* (Thank you friends, family and relatives) for supporting us. We want all our Indigenous relatives, especially our young ones, to start a band. It can be intimidating at first, but practice and you'll find your groove. Let's keep fighting hetero-patriarchy and settler colonialism!

weedrat.bandcamp.com

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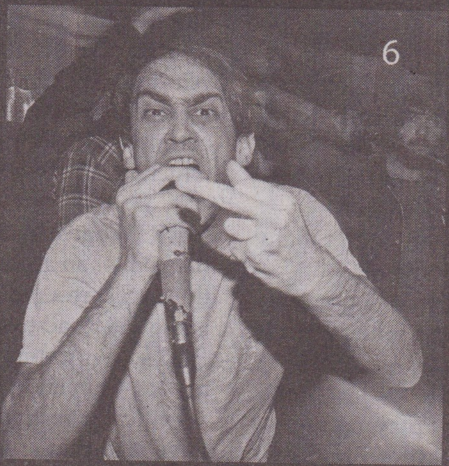
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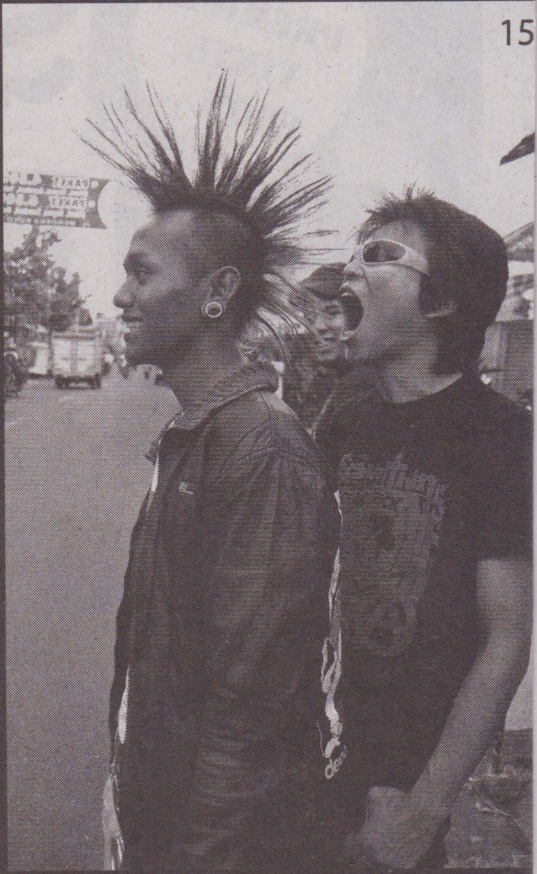
1. SEX STAINS
2. LIFE'S HALT
3. ROLEX
4. STRAIGHT ANSWER
5. MOTHER COUNTRY MOTHER FUCKERS
6. OPT OUT
7. CONUEST FOR DEATH
8. SCREAMING FIST
9. NEON PISS
10. FORWARD
11. ANINOKO
12 SILENT ERA
13. DEATH GLAM
14. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT
15. KIKU EATS MOHAWK.



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UBIK

Interview and introduction by Lena Molnar.
Photos by David Forcier and Steve Patrick.

I FIRST SAW ONE OF UBIK'S EARLIER SHOWS, upstairs at Melbourne's Grace Darling in 2017 and was unsettled by the raw lineup of Ash Wyatt (vocals), Tessa Tribe (guitar), and Nellie Pearson (bass) with Chris Simpson on drums. Having their sell out demo and their other bands of Masses, 58008, Little Desert and Red Red Krovvy to cloud my judgement, I was gripped by the "brat beat" from first sighting. The next time I would see them play was a few months later at Total Attack in my hometown Brisbane with Max Kohane (Agents of Abhorrence, Faceless Burial...) harnessing the drum kit, fleshing out their thumping sound with a more eruptive rhythm. From these first shows, the release of their 2016 demo and subsequent self-titled 7", the band has been able to very quickly form its own presence that is unnerving, familiar, and catchy. The band's sound is weird, angry, and formidable, and their shows feel like a binding experience to dance and yell catch-cry lyrics. In this interview the founding Ubik members answer some questions about sci-fi movies, Australian politics, and how these have influenced the band.

MRR: The band is a compelling force to reckon with live if one has the chance. Part of the original motivation behind the band was for three members of another Melbourne band, the goth group Masses, to challenge each other by playing different instruments together in a more confrontational, punk way. How is this challenge felt by youse? Do you feel part of this intention is what makes the response to the band so frequently engaged?

Tessa: When we started Ubik I did not know how to play guitar at all and for our original drummer Chris it was his first band and first time drumming. Ash is also the vocalist for another band Red Red Krovvy whilst drumming in Masses and Nellie is quite the multi-instrumentalist but had been singing and playing synth in Masses for the past four years or so and I had been playing bass in Masses. We started Ubik to be a "chill fun side project" from Masses and for myself personally as a way to gain a bit of confidence whilst bungling my way through learning guitar. I was so awful at the beginning though, I remember Ubik's second show was supporting Belgrado and I remember the singer Patrycja saying in a very sweet way "you looked so stiff and nervous like you wanted to cry." Thankfully I've come a bit

further in my playing since then, but I still play bar chords incorrectly with three fingers, but whatever, it works. I'm not sure if me and Chris being so inexperienced and fresh helped our live show early on per say, but as far as music writing goes having the experience of Nellie and Max to mix with my rudimentary guitar style boosted my confidence as a musician immensely.

Ash: I've learnt a lot from playing in Ubik...Everyone is such an interesting musician to work with and I find the songwriting exciting. I reckon it's made us way better musicians!

Nellie: Well thanks for that Lena, I like that we're engaging! Honestly most of the time I'm on stage I'm either internally screaming or staring at the drums, with brief moments of "yeah this is boss". Music is fun, and anyone can do it. I think it's really important to join a long line of examples that encourage DIY and to play music if one wants to. I also want to constantly strive to improve and expand.

MRR: That's awesome and seems consistent with the agitation and ethic of the band. Listening to Ubik; there is a sound of political dissociation that builds through the music's pace and engagement of the lyrics. The mood is clearly fun and bratty, though it speaks to the absurd. Can you speak to the intention of building this atmosphere either on record or as a live band?

Tessa: Musically Nellie and I crafted the songs without lyrical content in mind, but Ash took our ideas of combining silly simplistic almost nursery rhyme-like anarcho inspired guitar melodies spliced with darker more hardcore punk sounds. Ash mirrors this weird Ubik Corporation idea that Nellie and I put into the music reflecting both the absurdity in the dark morose political climate in Australia and slightly sillier things like Twitter and Melbourne public transport. Live I personally am just trying to hit the right notes and less so creating an atmosphere, however I feel Ash's on-stage banter lends itself to the absurdity I mentioned earlier, hehe.

Ash: I'm not sure if I feel like I've done anything that intentionally. I think being a smart arse and a goof comes through maybe in an absurd way. Make do with what you're good at I guess!

Nellie: I want to sum it up as pissed off and taking the piss. Ubik was almost a throwaway name at the beginning but it's worked really well for INCORPORATING (geddit) a dystopic through-line for our sound and ideas, be they personal or political (it's always both). I think the moods we're mainly going for in the music are anxious and angry. Because that's both punk and how we feel—and Ash's satirical bent goads us to have moments of silliness which is also fun as hell.

MRR: OK so Ubik Corporation™... the content of Ubik's recordings have been making parallels with dystopian fiction, personal reflection and the broader Australian context. Each of your releases continues to roll out a sci-fi classic, (such as "The Fly"), a topical Australian political meme ("Andrew Bolt's Twitter Account") and personal angst or exhaustion ("Sleep"). Your upcoming release will stay on this theme, drawing links between the ordinary and ridiculous as political. I love that. These days it becomes harder to distinguish sci-fi as allegory or as a call to protest or warning. How does using these themes help to either influence your songs or reflect your observations of Australian or global politics?

Ash: I stole the idea of using movies as lyric inspiration from Kate Bush—I thought it was a good approach to use when I was stuck for ideas. Maybe it's the same morbid curiosity that fuels my love for sci-fi and horror that also fuels my curiosity of disgusting right-wing politicians, and the "intellectual dark web." I don't think I have anything to add to any greater intellectual conversation, but if I can make fun of these soulless shills from a stage, well I think it can't hurt to make them look moronic whenever you can.

Tessa: As much as I love our Cronenberg medley (three songs we sometimes play in a row live about the movies *The Fly*, *Videodrome* and *Shivers*) sometimes it's easier to call a spade a spade. We just recorded for a new 12" EP that will hopefully be out this year, one of my favourites is called "Peter Dutton is A Terrorist" because well, he straight up is. For people outside Australia Peter Dutton is a conservative politician who, when we wrote it, was safeguarding the current offshore detention centers where Australia imprisons asylum seekers indefinitely. A large portion of the population condemns the government and Dutton the individual for so heavily contributing to the continuation of concentration camps. It's less a contribution to intellectual conversation and more so expressing the continual and complete horror that our taxes feed this abusive cycle and pay this cretin's salary. The mundanities of missing the bus, classic sci-fi, and Andrew Bolt's twitter account might seem a bit disparate at times but all come

under the umbrella of the Ubik conglomerate and contribute to trying to translate the weird dystopian landscape we're all forced to exist in whether at home in Australia or abroad into something slightly tongue in cheek.

Nellie: I think speculative fiction has always acted as metaphor and warning simultaneously. Much like punk—keeping an eye on the current situation, what's wrong, and how it could go wronger. Starting those conversations and awareness is important on every level.

MRR: You play with a lot of different lineups for shows, seemingly eager to involve a variety of audiences in Melbourne as well as broadly in Australia. You have also been able to connect with partners in punk, Perth's Cold Meat for a split last year. Both bands playing homage to previous generations' grandmamas of punk Exene and Siouxsie, testifying the binds of the underground and female friendship. Who are your peers and what is happening in Australian punk right now that connects you with any other group?

Tessa: We are very lucky especially in Melbourne to play shows across lots of different sub-genres in the punk scene and beyond punk, it's nice to be able to connect with different scenes and not be pigeonholed. Our sister bands whom we play with regularly and love I'd have to mention Pest, Bitumen, Vampire, and our labelmates Rabid Dogs. Outside of Melbourne we of course have a strong connection with our west coast Perth buds Cold Meat whom we did the 2018 split EP with out on Lost in Fog Records and Helta Skelta Records. That split initially came out of a mutual admiration, I think, between the bands but morphed into a slightly more meaningful feminist project when we added the X and Siouxsie covers. From the Ubik end we picked "Nausea" to cover initially because it's such a cracker track and the organ parts really lend itself to a kazoo solo we shoved in seeing as we are sans-organ. But as I looked more into X I realised Exene Cervenka was really left out and criminally overshadowed in so much of X's history by John Doe with so little about her being available knowledge.

Nellie: I'd like to add Tol to that list!

Tessa: I feel like Melbourne is slowly changing into a more inclusive scene especially since the 2000s when I was growing up, the only women I remember seeing play punk were Emily from Straightjacket Nation and Jacquie and Kate from Schifosi. In saying that underground music and punk in Australia is still such a boys' club which is so bloody boring, it's certainly gross but no shock to hear some male musicians publicly harking on about how it's such a rough trot to be a cis-white male in the Melbourne music scene today with all this "political correctness" gone mad.

MRR: Hahaha yeah, when it can be such a "boys' club" in this small, and far-flung community of ours, it can feel like everyone's pinned up to the extremes of their values and ethics. At least when there's

only so many of us it's easier to spot those we wanna work with and keep building something else, which Ubik and your other bands seem to be a part of. As musicians who have been playing in and around the Melbourne community and who have toured globally for many years, what benefits or challenges to creating this kind of music do you find unique to our landscape?

Tessa: I personally took a lot of my musical influence for Ubik from artists abroad, however the lyrical content of Ubik I feel balances out the more British influence of anarcho I write with and American hardcore punk Nellie writes with closer to home content. As far as drawing from our own local landscape I feel that's where Ash and Max really shine. Obviously, Ash's lyrics speak more to a dystopian Australian vision but even Max having played in so many formative hardcore, grind and death metal bands in Melbourne I think comes through a bit in the style of drums he plays in Ubik, even though Ubik is at times a lot slower than Max's other projects. But I'm certainly not a drummer so maybe I'm imagining things. As far as challenges…I'm not sure, unlike other projects Ubik has been really fun and we haven't done any huge challenging tours yet, other than a recent short dash to Sydney for Nag Nag Nag festival. Ash, Nellie, and I have toured three times internationally and a bit in Australia in our other band Masses so we are very close and I feel know each other well now as musicians and whilst Melbourne has its challenges, niches, and hypocrisies I feel lucky to be involved in a geographically situated punk scene that does have access (sometimes) to DIY venues and with some productive and like-minded people.

Nellie: For me I find that the Melbourne/Australian DIY network is pretty varied and active, and watching and hearing all this music inspires me to action. Musically I try not to think about context however; we sort of hit on our sound early on and I enjoy expanding it with influences from the eclectic things I like rather than being specific (but yes, also hardcore).

ubikpunk.bandcamp.com

NOT NORMAL

There are a handful of record labels that define the American DIY punk underground at any given time, and Not Normal Tapes and Records has been one of those labels over the course of the past decade-plus. Run primarily by Ralph Rivera and currently based in Chicago, IL, Not Normal has released nearly seventy cassettes and records of some of the most adventurous and exhilarating punk and hardcore bands the world has to offer. I knew right away that I wanted to feature an interview with Ralph about his label in one of these last print issues of Maximum Rocknroll. *For me, Not Normal exemplifies the ethos I associate with the best of DIY punk and hardcore: fearless, unapologetic, irreverent, and ardent in its dedication to music that stands for something.*

Interview and introduction by Golnar Nikpour. Photos by Yasmin Panjwani.

MRR: Tell us about starting the label. What was the impetus for starting Not Normal Tapes? What kind of label had you hoped to do when you first started?

When I was sixteen or seventeen I had a label with this kid who was kind of an idiot and didn't do a ton of work. I realized it had run its course, and that I wanted to do more stuff but working with this kid wasn't it. I approached my partner Raven and was like, "Hey do you have any interest in helping out with this? We could get more people involved and do something cool." There was a lot of cool stuff going on in Northwest Indiana at the time—this would've been 2008—and it just wasn't getting any attention.

In 2008 people just didn't care about the Northwest Indiana scene, there wasn't anything like Coneheads or CCTV. But there were these really good bands like Guinea Kid and Pukeoid and my own bands I guess. I felt like the NWI scene really deserved more attention; it deserved to have someone put the work and effort in. There were also some Chicago bands we felt were also not getting enough attention and we wanted to do that stuff as well. My band at the time had two sold out demos out on that other label but people were still asking about them. That ended up being the first release on the label—the Cold Shoulder demo.

Raven took the initiative and found a high-speed tape duplicator. At the time, there were all these churches selling tape duplicators because they used to record sermons and mass produce and sell them to whoever couldn't make it to mass. We bought two and were able to do like seven tapes at a time. We did the first ten releases on those old duplicators.

MRR: You based in Northwest Indiana at the time? When did you move to Chicago, and why did you make the move?

We were in NWI at the time. Well, we were technically in Illinois, but Calumet City and Lansing are right on the border, and there isn't really a scene right there. All the shows and all the bands were based in Hammond or Crown Point. So where we were was part of the northwest Indiana scene even though it wasn't technically Indiana.

We moved to Chicago in 2012, 2013. This is about our seventh year here. I wasn't super happy about moving at first, but in the long run it's been really good to have our own space and have more opportunities. It probably won't make anybody from Northwest Indiana happy to hear this, but I do think Chicago a great place. In NWI there's a relative isolation where because you're bored, you can do really cool things, but most people there don't want to admit that we definitely benefit from the proximity to Chicago. We're not in Idaho, we're not in Montana; we're 45 minutes from the city. When I was a kid, there weren't

cool things coming through northwest Indiana, but that's changed.

MRR: Have you and Raven done the label together throughout the history of Not Normal? Is it a totally joint venture?

It started that way, but Raven has been teaching for the last five years. That became her chief priority and was always her true passion. But in the beginning, she handled a lot of stuff right alongside me, picking bands, dubbing tapes, stuffing records, handling mailorder, etc. The first vinyl releases were stuffed and mailed off by Raven while I was in Europe. At this point, pretty much everything is handled by me, but she still listens to gripes and complaints, and is gracious enough to allow a full third of the house to be overrun by this fucking money pit.

MRR: The first several releases on the label were all cassette releases, and you still do a lot of tapes. Was the idea to always do a tape label, and later on you changed your mind? Or was it more happenstance that it was all tapes at first?

It's always been Not Normal Tapes—that has always been the main banner. Tapes are cheap, you get them quickly, you can make them look good. In 2008, tapes were just starting to be a thing again, so it was kind of novel at the time. Some of the older guys in Chicago were like, "Why are you doing tapes? Just do a record, just do a CD." But CDs are ugly—they're completely disposable! They don't have the tactile joy of a tape or a record.

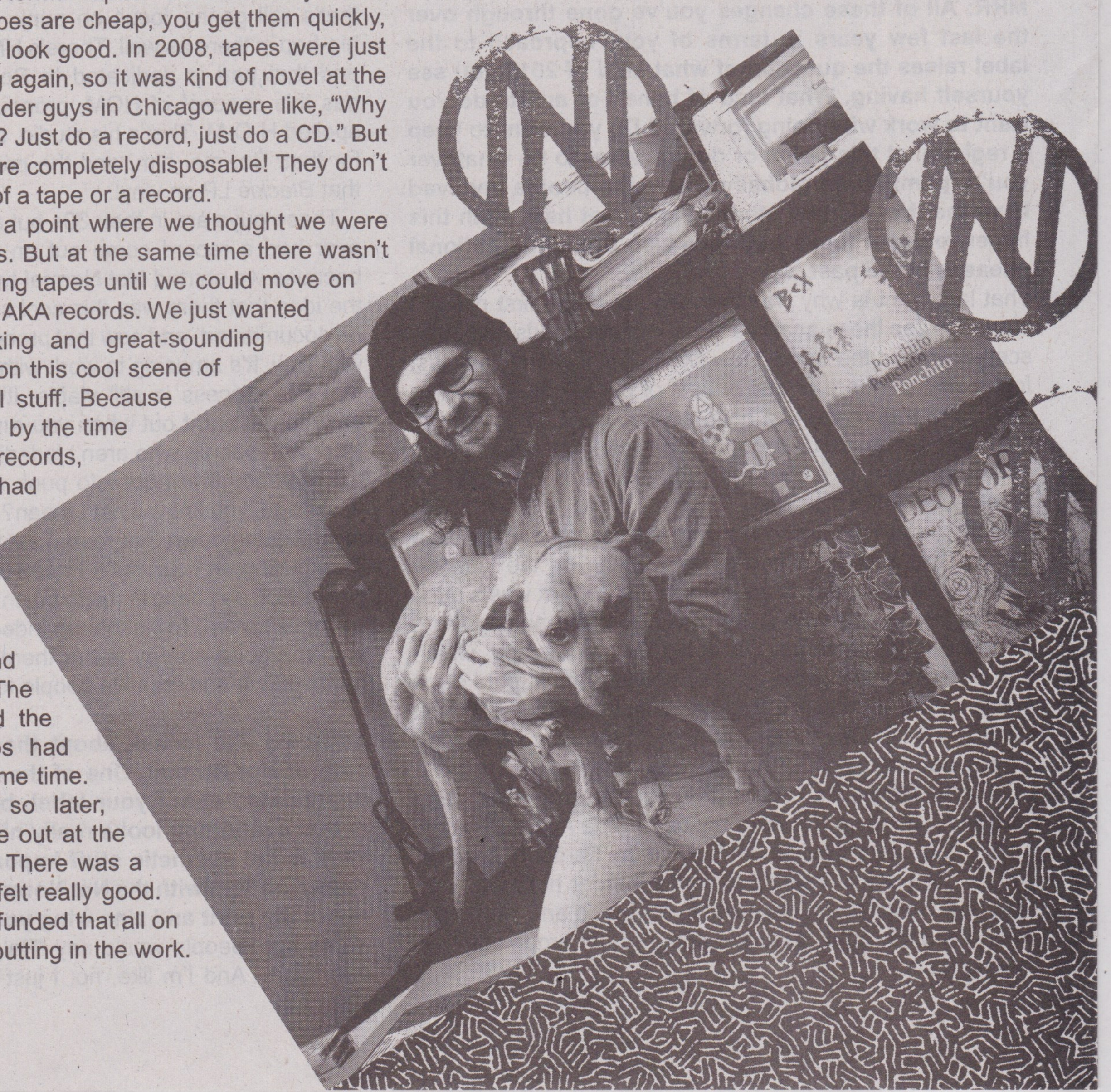
There was never a point where we thought we were only gonna do tapes. But at the same time there wasn't a feeling of only doing tapes until we could move on to something better, AKA records. We just wanted to make good-looking and great-sounding tapes that focused on this cool scene of people making cool stuff. Because tapes are so cheap, by the time we decided to do records, Raven and I only had to put in like a hundred dollars out of pocket.

We did two records at once, a Pukeoid 7" and RazorXFade LP. The Pukeoid demo and the RazorXFade demos had come out at the same time. Then, a year or so later, those records came out at the same time as well. There was a throughline, which felt really good. It felt good to have funded that all on our own, just from putting in the work.

MRR: So there's always been a kind of collaborative element to the label in that sense, right? Where you're working with a bunch of people in a scene to make something together?

Definitely. I feel like I kinda lost that over the last couple years though, so right now I'm in a new era of the label where I'm trying to step back, do less, and rebuild. The big initial influences for the label were Dischord and SST. With those labels, you'd see bands break up and then form again in new configurations. There is a family feeling with those labels. That's what we wanted. Like, Guinea Kid is members of Pukeoid, it's members of Liquids, it's members of CB Radio Gorgeous. CB Radio Gorgeous has members of Raw Nerve, members of Red Delicious. There were always the same people involved from the beginning.

But there was a time period when it started to feel like it was all too much. The focus wasn't so much on this hyper-local family thing, and I got burnt out really bad. This was 2017. I was like, "I'm done, I'm not doing this fucking label anymore." It wasn't anybody else; it was where my brain was at more than anything. I felt like I



was doing too much stuff that I didn't feel as strongly about as I used to. I did a couple of releases where I felt like the members kinda half-assed the art and presentation, and I felt like, man, this looks like shit. I wouldn't wanna buy this, so why am I paying for it? I'm not looking for anybody to kiss my ass, but there was also a degree of thanklessness, like, it was expected that I'd just do things. As a label you should be excited about what you're doing, but you shouldn't be more excited than the band, you know? So in 2018 I was like "cool, I'm only doing one more release." But then then I would up doing nine. [*laughter*]

I said I was only doing the Deodorant LP and that's it, but then I did fucking nine releases. That saved the label. I did two tapes for a rapper named Roy Kinsey, I did a tape for my new band CT-85, I did the Dagger tape. With Dagger, those guys did everything. All of those bands—Dagger, the Floor Above, Lipschitz, Deodorant, Roy—put so much work into their releases; it was really a collaborative process. With those releases from last year, there's only one release that wasn't from the Chicagoland area. Everything was from either Chicago or NWI. The Floor Above is from Nashville, but I did all the art so there's still a connection to Chicago.

MRR: All of these changes you've gone through over the last few years in terms of your approach to the label raises the question of what kind of 2019 you see yourself having. What kind of bands or artists do you want to work with going forward? Do you want to keep it regional at this point, or do you want to do whatever you're pumped on globally where the people involved have that Not Normal ethos? I love that have both this hyper regional focus but have also done international releases in the past...

That last point is why we stretched out in the first place. I started to see those qualities I love in other bands and other scenes around the world. I feel like the best labels don't just focus on one genre or one subset of punk. I never felt like we had a sound; we just have a vibe. I just want to work with cool bands. 2019 is gonna be fucking weird! I've only offered releases to a couple of punk bands, but I've offered to release a lot of hip-hop.

Right now, I'm finally working on the next *Bughouse* comp. The hardcore comp I was working on the last few years never came out. Start to finish that project was a bust, but I'm taking some of those tracks and I'm putting them on the *Bughouse* comp. I'm doing the Jocko tape, which is a kind of controversial—lots of people hate it, but I don't give a shit. It sounds like Rage Against the Machine; I think it's sick. I think they fit the Not Normal ethos, even though they're not a raging fast hardcore punk band. I'm doing a CB Radio Gorgeous record. I've offered one other thing for a punk band so far, this new band Side Action. They're a very cool, very intense kind of moshy hardcore band. It seems like punk is veering toward a harder hardcore vibe right now, which is not necessarily my bread and butter, but when it's done right, it's done right. I can't argue with the fucking facts.

MRR: How does the hip-hop stuff fit in?

The hip-hop stuff is interesting because I met Roy Kinsey completely randomly. I booked a show at the library where I work but my manager forgot, so she scrambled last minute to move it to a different library. It just so happened that Roy was there checking out the show because he worked as a teen librarian at that library. He ended up staying for the whole show and had a really good time. He was like, "I've never been to a punk show before but this is really cool, let's keep in touch." He texted when his album came out, and I listened to it and thought it was fucking great. I asked him to play a show I was doing for Jocko last year, and it was a wild experience. That night I was like, "Hey man, I wanna put out your album on tape." That was the start. It went from a completely chance meeting at a library to this point where I'm really good friends with Roy and with the producer of his record, and we're doing a bunch of things together.

Going forward, Not Normal Tapes is splitting into three different branches. Not Normal Tapes is the main entity, but I'm trying to compartmentalize what I do. There's gonna be a print and zine arm, there's the part that's still gonna focus on punk, but I'll be sprinkling hip-hop in there as well. There's HNN, Hom Not Normal and that part is dedicated to Roy and his work. He has this concept of HOM; pronounced like home but spelled H-O-M. That's his studio, and he has big plans for that. So, me, him, and the producer are releasing that *Blackie* LP on vinyl.

These guys are in their 30s but neither of them have ever had a record come out on vinyl. And it's crazy because we started Not Normal twelve years ago with the idea that there was this cool scene that needed to be documented, and now that process is repeating itself with Roy. It's amazing to work with Roy and remember that this process is still viable, it's still important. It's easy to get burnt out when you run a label. It's nice to work with people who aren't jaded!

Everybody that I got into punk with dropped out six years ago, you know what I mean? And I don't ever see myself going down that road. Last year, there was a lot of reflecting on how much I need to put in at this point. How much do I have in me to put in? What else should I be focusing on? To just be reminded of how much good shit and good energy is out there and to meet these hardworking and creative people felt really good.

MRR: I'd like to ask about the art and aesthetic side of Not Normal. One of the things I've always appreciated about your label, bands, comps, etc. is that everything looks really nice and intentional. Why is the aesthetic stuff important to you? How does it all fit in with the Not Normal vibe? And tell us about the print and zine wing you just mentioned.

Years ago, people would say "Ralph hates art, Ralph is anti-art." And I'm like, no, I just don't think that the

photos white dudes take of plastic bags are all that interesting. That's not doing it for anybody, you know? It's fucking boring. [*Laughter*]

But on *These are the Voices in the Back of Your Head*, which was our first comp tape and our first release with international bands, I wanted it to look distinctive. At that time, everything was black and white pictures of war. I'm a very self-serious person myself, but everything just seemed like its head was so far up its own ass, you know? Like, these people who have never been affected by war and who directly benefit from American wars have all this war imagery. It just felt so exploitative and weird and shitty.

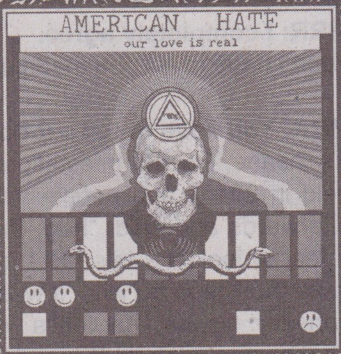
I felt that there were artists doing other kinds of work. I wanted those people to be involved with Not Normal too, so that's why that tape had Matt Williams art for the cover. His stuff is very creepy, but also kind of silly. For the next comp, the *Welcome to 2013* LP, I felt I had a chance to have even more artists involved. There is such a focus on bands sometimes that people who book shows, who do art, who take pictures, who screenprint everything don't get enough credit. It was very important to me for *Welcome to 2013* to make sure that everybody was included.

I had wanted to take that and push it into overdrive for the hardcore comp, so it's depressing that that's never coming out. I had these boxes custom-made for it, and when I finally saw them, I was like, "Oh my god, I want to take this home, I want to do this comp again, let me figure out what I can do." And then less than a month later, the place burned to the ground...

MRR: No!!
...and all 1000 custom-made boxes were destroyed. That's how that comp went from start to finish. Not everything works out how its planned [*laughter*].

As far as the print component of Not Normal, I recently started an art collective with my friend Yasmeen, and we're working on a bunch of different pieces, which we plan on publishing. I'm working on some zines that will be a collection of writing and art, just my own thing, some short story shit. I'm trying to convince my friend Tyler to let me publish his work, he's been doing photography and he's been doing really cool stuff, but he's such a fucking doubter. But he's doing great stuff and he messes with it with Xerox machines and makes it look even cooler. It's very powerful. I wanna capture those voices in punk and hardcore and hip-hop who have something to say beyond the music, or they have art to make beyond the music. If I can somehow create ways for them to show that off, I'd like to do that.

MRR: Would you say that there are there bands that you like but you don't necessarily think fit into the Not Normal vibe? Or is it basically that if you like something, it can be on Not Normal?
I think it's the latter. I've done some real goofy shit. Like, there was a time when I did a Curmudgeon LP and a few releases later I did the Suck Dry LP, and then it was Big Zit, Ooze, American Hate, and a Big Crux LP all at the same time. And those are all drastically different in terms of sounds, but I believed in all those bands. I begged for that Big Crux LP to come out. I would write Felix weekly and be like, "please let me do this fucking record." I felt this energy and commitment to what he was making. And with Curmudgeon, Ryan from the band did all the art for it. And it was so striking and visceral but also very clean. These bands had a vision, you know? It was freaks making art because that's what they had to do. And that's who I want to work with; that's all I want to do. I did a fucking country record in 2017, you know what I mean? And I did a hip-hop record when it felt necessary. So no, I don't think there's anything that could possibly fall outside the bounds of what Not Normal is for me. Unless it sucks. If it sucks, then I ain't fucking with it [*laughter*].



MRR: There are bunch of releases on your label by Latinx or black and brown punks and artists. Is that just a natural outgrowth of the people who are part of your community and who you are? Or is it more a conscious effort to have certain voices be a big part of Not Normal?

That's a good question. I think it's probably both, you know? When I was in northwest Indiana, there were two Mexican kids in the scene. No one gave us a rough time or anything, but I don't think I realized how much I didn't have until I came to a show on the south side of Chicago and I was really welcomed with open arms by the folks in Sin Orden, Condenada, No Slogan, by all these people who were like, "cool, you're one of us, hang out, we'll book your bands on shows." But really, I think you have to try really fucking hard to book a show that is only white men and to have a label that is only white men.

MRR: I completely agree.

I don't have to tell you that! [*laughter*]

MRR: You have to tell a lot of people that, though.

It's insane. For the Infestational [*Ed.* the Not Normal fest, held in 2016], and people I didn't know came up to me afterwards and said, "Hey, thank you, it means a lot for a fest to look like this." But it wasn't a stated mission to have the lineup be what it was; I didn't even think about it honestly. It's just that that's what punk fucking looks like! That's what punk is! If you don't notice it or you ignore it *you're* the pud, you know? I dunno man, I don't have time for these old-guy fuckin' D-beat bands that are playing the same shit they played ten years ago, with the same people they were in bands with ten years ago, and they wonder why nobody gives a shit about them anymore. It's because you're not growing and you're not moving!

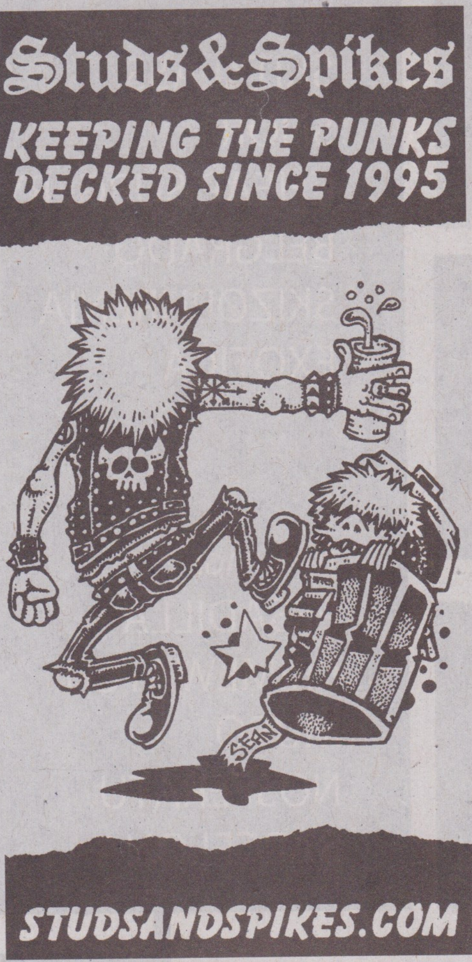
I can't front like I've always been perfect or I always knew what was up, or that I haven't contributed in negative ways. I know I'm not perfect. But I was always lucky, even in northwest Indiana, to be in groups of punks that weren't just dudes. And when I started coming to shows in Chicago it really opened my eyes to see shows that were booked almost exclusively by queer women of color, and to see this huge community of people of color making all their own records and booking all their own shows. I was so lucky to have those influences. It just eventually became second nature to see punk this way. It's something I think about, but it's not something I want to make into a thing, you know what I mean? I want to normalize this vision of punk.

MRR: That seems like a good spot to end. Any last words?

Oh man! Last words in one of the last issues of *MRR*. I guess I'd like to thank the people who have contributed to the vision behind the scenes while I was getting the vast majority of the credit. To Raven for the work and energy she put into the early days of the label and her continuing support and understanding; to Jim Gies who runs a stellar label on his own called Hip Kid Records and still finds the time to help me stuff records, pack and ship distro, pick shit up from the post office for me; to Tyler Bonam for carting the label all over the country on every tour we've done. I'd like to thank *MRR* for all the support they've given us over the years, to Golnar, Martin, Grace, Dan, Greg, Layla, Mariam, and everyone who ever gave us a good review and really got what we were going for.

For anyone reading this, I guess I just want to impart the importance of supporting shit while it exists and not bemoaning the end after the fact. The bands, labels, zines, etc. that you dig can only go on for so long without your monetary support. Coke, Nike, Levi, Chuck Taylor's, Apple—there's a million fucking people buying that shit everyday to make themselves look hip and alternative-adjacent, but most of those things cost ten times the price of your friend's zine or the record they worked really hard on. The corporations that host that cool punk playlist you found through algorithmic magic will eventually boot it when they can't find a way to monetize it. The band you hate for talking to Vice existed for two years being ignored before they said "fuck it!" in hopes they'd reach anybody with an open ear. DIY is only as good as you make it, so make it good, ya dig?

notnormaltapes.bandcamp.com



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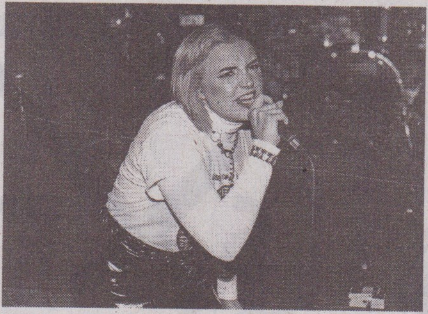

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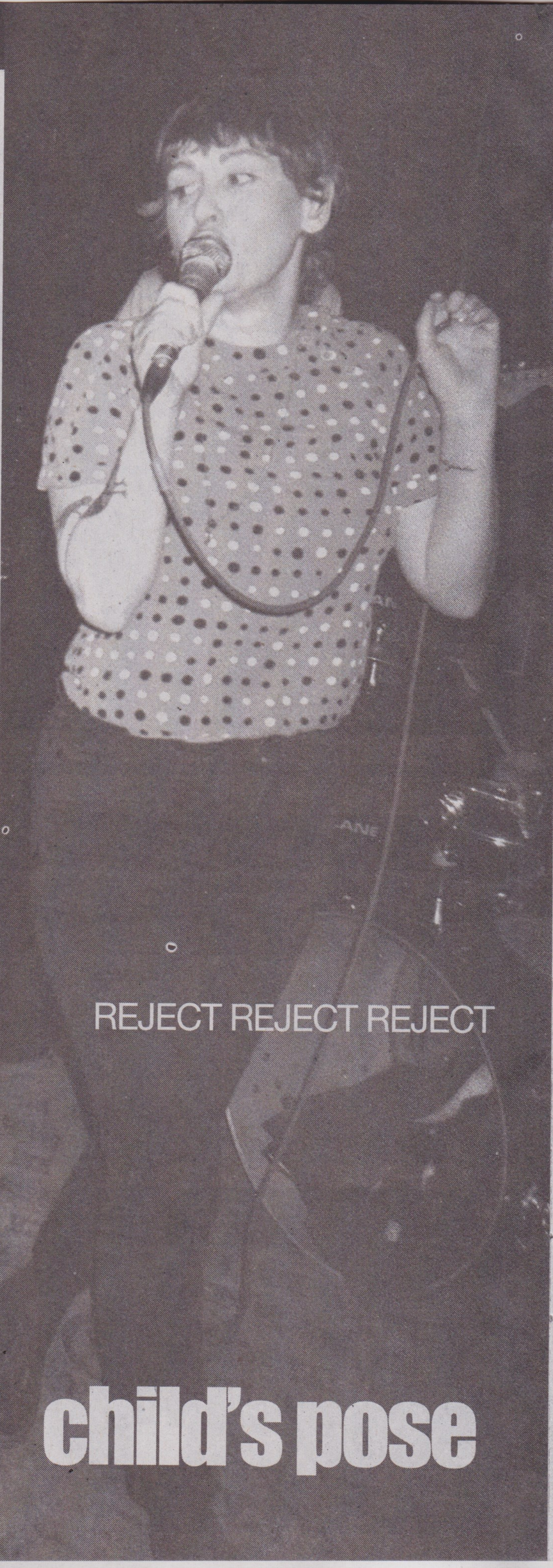
child's pose

REJECT REJECT REJECT

Child's Pose makes affecting, fun garage punk with a dark edge, like they're 40 years off being on the Back From The Grave *compilations (their Rats cover being an affirmative wink here). Kai, Oli, Rich, and Sop are from London, and also play in Nekra, Snob, Sauna Youth and Woolf, among many others. Fuzztone guitar, dynamic bass lines, feral vocal melodies and energetic drums make up a sound that is soothing in a way that is medicinal and familiar, while at the same time being primitive, driving and impossible not to move/sing along to. Their most recent record was a self titled EP on Nervous Energy, which if you haven't heard, you might remember from everyone's end-of-year lists.*

Interview and introduction by Alex Graves. Photos by Joe Briggs, Robin Christian, B Hills, Simon Marsham.



MRR: Who are each of you?

Oli: My name is Oli, I am a 31 year old man who works in a school at the moment. I live in North East London, and I like listening to heavy metal music, amongst other things.

Richard: My name is Richard, age undisclosed, I live in Brixton and I am an artist. I work for an organization called Heart and Soul, in south London. I play guitar in this band.

Kai: My name's Kai, from North London. Big Arsenal fan. That's me in a nutshell, actually!

Sop: My name is Sop, I am a queer, non-binary artist. I also have a chronic illness which informs and molds most of my life if not all.

MRR: How does music fit in your daily life?

Richard: Music fits into every day of my life: at work, I support people with learning disabilities to make music and form bands. Then, when I'm painting, I always listen to music. Currently, I've been listening to Charles Mingus – *The Clown* on repeat and for work, I listen to loads of pop music; this morning, I was listening to Rita Ora's new album *Phoenix*.

Kai: I also work supporting a child with learning disabilities. He is really obsessed with music so I listen to loads of current pop songs to keep up with him. Also just for myself because they make me happy! Linnea [Kai's girlfriend] comments often on how much I listen to music…I've always taken it for granted, but it has been really a guiding thing in my life, that my mum gave me. I usually listen to one album for weeks or months on end, and Nao's *Saturn* is my current obsession. Check it out!

Oli: I used to have a relationship with music where I would download a lot of stuff/listen to a lot of records all the time, but that is a bit more restricted these days. Partly because my walk to work is so short and it never feels like I have time. When I get to school, I enjoy playing music so the children can hear it coming in, and observing their responses. They seem to really like the kind of music you would get in a spa or something. I play them this artist called Laraaji a lot, and they seem to respond well to him. And some other kind of classical stuff, or maybe jazz…occasionally some metal too. At the weekend, I do get time to listen to records!

Sop: I have to listen to music for a large chunk of the day to keep my sanity. At the moment I cannot stop listening to Junglepussy.

MRR: What's your favorite thing about where you're from, or where you live?

Sop: I'm originally from Devon, deep in the countryside, and my favourite thing about that is growing up as a virtual genderless feral animal. I lived there until I was ten and was constantly covered in mud, and it was total freedom… It's weird that I live in London now, for so many years as it's so claustrophobic and busy and crazy, so when I think about happy times, it's basically in the middle of fields.

Kai: During her pregnancy, my Mum was living in a domestic violence shelter in Holloway while she was on the waiting list for a permanent flat. She got one down the road in Highbury when I was born and both these places are in close proximity to Arsenal football club's stadiums (Highbury then and now The Emirates). And it sounds corny, but having such a force of a club around

where I grew up really affected my friendships, hobbies and feeling of community. Just walking down the street on a match day and making friends with someone else in a shirt like mine...I live in south London now and I can't do that because I might get beaten up by Millwall fans, but it's something I really miss, all of the friendships I made through living in that area through affinity to football.
Richard: There's things I like about the part of London I live in specifically, but in general, I love the community built around art and music, and the way that relates to working with people with learning disabilities. It feels like we can achieve things together and it's really important to me to be a part of.
Oli: I really like where I live now, for similar reasons to Richard said. There is a diversity and excitement to living in London, being able to meet loads of people from all over the world and the sense of community is awesome. I'm from Kent, from the seaside, and I have a nostalgia for it despite not being grateful for it when I was there, but I see myself moving back there at some point.

MRR: What role did music play in your life when you were younger?
Oli: The first band I ever got into was Queen—I used to watch Queen VHSs and obviously really wanted to be like Freddie Mercury, so: top off in the lounge, on a Saturday morning, we're talking 5:00/6:00 am. I specifically asked for tight jeans for Christmas, and after noticing that Freddie was sweating a lot in the videos, I would rub spit on my face to get the authentic Mercury experience. And then I followed a similar progression to most of my friends from Kent, where we tried to get into the most extreme music possible, which took me through noisecore, metalcore, hardcore, and all that sort of thing. But in the past few years, I've been getting into a larger range of different things.
Kai: My first experience of music was through my mum who was a raver in the '90/'00s (I was born in '92), so just listening to pirate radio every evening: Sticky, Oxide & Neutrino, Miss Dynamite, Pied Piper, and all of that stuff. Listening to mixtapes that she got from her friends, of the new cool garage and funky house stuff…I had a really fun introduction to music and dance and learning how fun it was and how it brought people together,
Sop: I was also raving in '92! Queen was the first ever band I listened to on headphones on a decent stereo when I was ten, blew my mind. I was obsessed with the charts and have 40 or so tapes recorded from the charts on the radio from around 1986–1992, in the early ones I dub over my own introductions for the songs. I was very pre-internet when I was young so we mostly traded cassettes of albums between friends.
Richard: Oli saying about Queen made me think of listening to my brother's Queen tapes all the time! He was part of the Queen fan club and I have this distinct memory of going to my mum's work whenever I was ill as I was too young to stay at home on my own (she was a caterer), so I'd go with the tape deck and sit at her work listening to Queen tapes all day. She's the reason I started playing drums (not in this band). I used to copy my brother a lot and he played guitar so I wasn't allowed to play guitar, but my mum really liked drums so encouraged me to learn. This is part of the reason why this band exists actually, as I always wanted to play guitar in a band so I'm finally allowed to! ...Then I got into Metallica and Green Day and all that stuff. I lived in Watford for a while, and discovering a DIY scene there, which was pivotal for me and it influenced my whole life. All the people I'm friends with, in a relationship with, my work: all centers around finding that space, so it permeates a lot.

MRR: How important is punk as oppositional thought to you?
Sop: Not even necessarily punk music, but anything oppositional is very important to me. Sometimes I find it kind of ridiculous how anti-authority I am and how anti-doing things in the normal societal agreed way, including creating/learning things in the way you're supposed to. I don't really care care about punk as a genre very much, but I care very deeply about it as an

COME WITH ME BABY AND LET'S GET FERAL

ethic. So in that sense: absolutely important.

Richard: I also like the contradiction contained within punk, it can be two things at the same time: you are against their system, but it still creates systems for it to exist within, and that relates to the work that I do. I support people to exist in a society and culture that can often exclude, so I am always intrigued and excited in the way you can be really against something, but then I'm still supporting people to want to exist within what I'm against. That point of privilege of being able to say no to something.

MRR: How do you relate to new music?

Kai: Yes, I like it. I don't know how to fit Arsenal into this question, but I guess we have some new chants? New players come in, new chants...But yeah, I listen to a lot of new pop and R&B stuff. I am trying to address that I haven't put in a lot of effort in punk stuff outside of London, but I like new music. And I'm definitely not jaded about punk, I just find myself a bit too busy to totally obsess over bands and find every record and liner note they've ever released in the way I used to when I was sixteen.

Oli: I think you're the most on-the-pulse of new things.

Sop: Yeah, you know way more than me!

Kai: Okay, maybe I am! Alright, scrap all of that.

Oli: I don't really like new bands that try and sound like they're old. I certainly prefer old music as I'm finding there's so much I haven't discovered. I sort of have a passing, very casual interest in the new trap style of rap, and some new electronic type stuff, like the NON worldwide collective. People like Chino Amobi. And punk, yeah! I feel bad that I don't know many current punk bands. There is a lot of good metal though, there are a few great metal bands around at the moment: Undergang, Phrenelith, Necrot, Hyperdontia, Moenen of Xezbeth and Perverted Ceremony are all exceptional and classics in the making.

Richard: When I find something I like I really mine it, which means I don't listen to a lot of stuff. I just find one thing I like and listen to it a lot. I had to listen to loads of pop music through work as I work with loads of young people, but now I just listen to it naturally and am interested in the production of it, or how to make it. The last punk thing I listened to was the Forra 7" which I really liked. There's a really good southeast London jazz scene which is actually really young. Around the corner from where I work, there's a night called Steam Down which is based in a tiny bar, and it's basically like a punk show. Floor show, dancing, you can barely get in. 200 people crammed in a 80 capacity venue. It's really nice knowing that this is going on on your doorstep.

Kai: Rich, do you listen to pop albums? It's something I really like doing.

Richard: I'm more of a singles guy.

Kai: I find it fun to check out the album that a really big radio single is on and see how it fits in that artist's whole thing. Like what are they going for? Anne Marie's album, Taylor Swift's last, Ella Mai, Ariana Grande. They all seem to be paying more attention to their whole albums which sort of contradicts the do a hit single, stream, tour, repeat model that is how you get rich in that world.

Oli: Yeah, I really noticed this listening to Rihanna – *Anti*. I know it's a few years old now, but it made me think of that.

MRR: What is the first show you've ever been to?

Oli: My first gig was a scout hut in Canterbury seeing a lot of hardcore bands, some touring bands from Belgium, and two of my personal favorites: One from Newcastle called 30 seconds until Armageddon, very good metalcore, and a local favourite xCanaanx,

who were brilliant when they were around.

Sop: My first show was seeing Transvision Vamp at Kentish Town Forum, I was too young to have a gin and tonic, but my aunt took me and gave me a gin and tonic. Wendy James was very cool wearing a swimming costume and in my first band, I wore swimming costumes, to try and be like Wendy James!

Richard: My first gig was seeing the Wonder Stuff in Reading. I had a very fun time.

Kai: I think my first gig was Mis-Teeq...or it could have been some Finsbury Park Festival fair gig too.

MRR: What was the best show you've been to?

Oli: When best gig springs to mind, it's very embarrassing because there's an inzanejohny meme which kind of takes the piss out of men like me being boring about this kind of thing, but I saw William Basinski's "Disintegration Loops" being played by a big orchestra, and there was a woman there playing clingfilm, to replicate the tape loop disintegrating. This is the first thing that springs to mind, I'm sure there's loads of others.

Richard: The thing that comes to mind is when Pertti Kurikan Nimipäivät and Zombie Crash played in Brighton in 2013 and I supported that tour to happen, it was a lot of hard work, and then the guitar player from Zombie Crash, Ryan, made a speech about it all and it's one of the most visceral reactions to music at a gig I've had and that moment of everybody being together.

Kai: Maybe Kate Bush? Or D'Angelo at Brixton Academy in 2012 was transformative. He was incredible.

Sop: Probably seeing Patti Smith do *Horses* at Queen Elizabeth Hall in 2006. The main memory I have of that is her telling everyone in full seriousness that the most important advice she could give to us at her age is to look after your teeth.

MRR: What are some musical references that inspired Child's Pose?

Sop: The lyrics in the band I did just before before Child's Pose were pretty heavy and very personal, so I was really conscious about trying to write lyrics that were more positive and universal. I really wanted to write songs like the Beach Boys in a classic populist kind of way. I quite like re-sampling other songs, lyrics and references and re-using them in different ways. I had just been to see a Thee Headcoats show at the Lexington with a surprise appearance of Thee Headcoatees (minus Holly) and I hadn't seen them play for so many years and it reminded me how *fun* they were and went to Rich to suggest doing a band like that.

Richard: I listened to a lot of Thee Headcoatees before the first rehearsal and guitar-sound wise, I've always really liked that Minutemen thing of the bass being the bass and guitar bringing the treble. I don't really know much about guitar tone, just like kind of scratchy.

Kai: I really wanted to do a band that people could dance to because that's most of the music I listen to, yet I hadn't really been in a band like that myself. I remember after we'd practiced a little bit and maybe we had "Miserable" as a song, I was listening to that band Devil's Dykes, their song "Fruitless," and I was like wow, it would be cool if we could write a song that made me feel as good as this song makes me feel. So that's the standard! In terms of my bass playing, I was inspired by Delta 5, ESG and Au Pairs. It's really fun thinking about it in that way and writing with Richard.

Oli: Everything everyone's said really resonates with me and I really like playing in a band with them for the reasons they've mentioned and their influences. The initial discussions did involve Thee Headcoatees and Sophie got me into the Shangri-Las. I kind of wanted to do a band that was a garagey beat-driven band, so it was a revelation when I did hear the Shangri-Las. I tried to put my drums in that kind of way, but I think all of us have a punk filter that everything goes through, which makes it not necessarily come out the way we might intend to, but in a way that is interesting and fun.

MRR: What are some themes you explore in your lyrics?

Sop: I'll either have a visual concept, or a

Specialist Subject Records.
Sop: It was a really early show and my cat had of 20 years had died the day before, and was in the back of the car down there staring out of the window, being really sad and then got really cheered up playing the show. It was a floor show, in a really small room and I remember looking up and being so happy that everyone was dancing.
Kai: Yeah Slagheap who also played that show led the dance floor revolution and were brilliant.

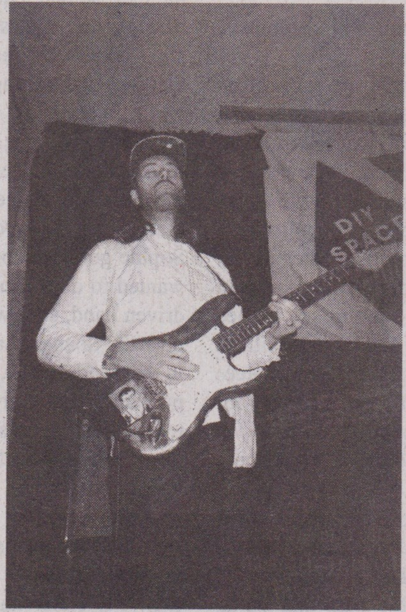
MRR: You all play in other bands, tell us about them and what each satisfies for you.
Oli: I play in Snob, which satisfies a fun hardcore, D-beat kind of thing which is really fun playing drums to. Sarcasm, which is kind of post-punk and I really enjoy playing drums in, in Savage Realm which is more of a death metal thing, and I play guitar in a new-ish band called Sorcerer, which is a metal/punk thing.
Sop: Currently I play in Woolf which has been going for around ten years and it satisfies being in a queer-feminist family, which kind of moves into art situations. We've played in galleries and also do art commissions. I play drums in Woolf which is intensely satisfying physically. The other thing is my new solo thing called Dead Mans Float, which satisfies experimental music and words, it's pretty personal.
Richard: I play drums and sing in Sauna Youth, where I do a lot of the lyric writing and artwork and things, which satisfies my weird controlling nature, or maybe attention to detail. I like the energy expenditure of playing drums and singing at the same time.
Kai: I play in a band called Nekra which I started because our singer had just moved to London and I sort of wanted to help her make friends and get to know her better, and I liked Paula and Alexandra's bands (Frau, Efialtis) and also wanted to get to know them better. In London, it's kind of hard to get more than one person in a place, but band practice sort of fixes that. It's been really fun to do for the two years we've been doing that in!

MRR: What's next for Child's Pose?
Sop: "Ella's Fate," a new song will be on *Typical Girls Vol 5*. We're also working on a release for Thrilling Living, which will be a record or EP, depending on how many songs we do.
Kai: If anyone wants to book us for a tour in north America, we would be up for that!

childspose.bandcamp.com

feeling or sense, like "Psyclone Town" started with me trying to work out how a song which smelt like the pavement in the summer when it just begins to rain, and ended up being about an kind of tornado town and mental health. "Feral" came from imagining living ferally in the woods and ended a queer positivity anti-normativity song for the freaks and weirdos! "CCMMD" is about my summer of 1989 in Kent and my teenage group of friends and also about my pal Estella of Big Joanie who had started volunteering at Girls Rock Camp, saying how young non-cis men can also be brave and play music something which I only started post 30! Then our most pretentious song (hah!) "Ella's Fate" is a mix about Joe Orton, the three Fates, and an early Derek Jarman film/footage of a party in some posh girl called Ella's garden raising money for a chandelier she had broken at someone else's party.

MRR: Are there any non musical things that inspired Child's Pose?
Kai: Fun, as a concept. In this essay, I will... I had really bad social anxiety growing up and it is a miracle that I ended up playing music. I joined my first band when I was sixteen, a straightedge band, and it took me ages to even face the audience. I would always face the drummer, and shows were the least fun part of it for me. I really liked practicing and recording, but I hated gigs. And it hasn't improved much until recently, when I tell myself: hey, this is a fun thing you are doing, you've written these songs, you really like them, now you're just gonna share them with strangers. It doesn't have to be a stressful thing, and if it is, you don't have to do it. It's been really cool talking about feeling that way in this band.
Sop: I guess in the beginning not all of us knew each other very well, and, I think Oli said early on that he was into it as it would be a chance to get to know us better and that being in a band is a great way to do that. We always have a really nice time together and it feels really easy, there is never any drama or anything. We don't get together very often to write or practice, but even so, it's a delight spending time with you all!



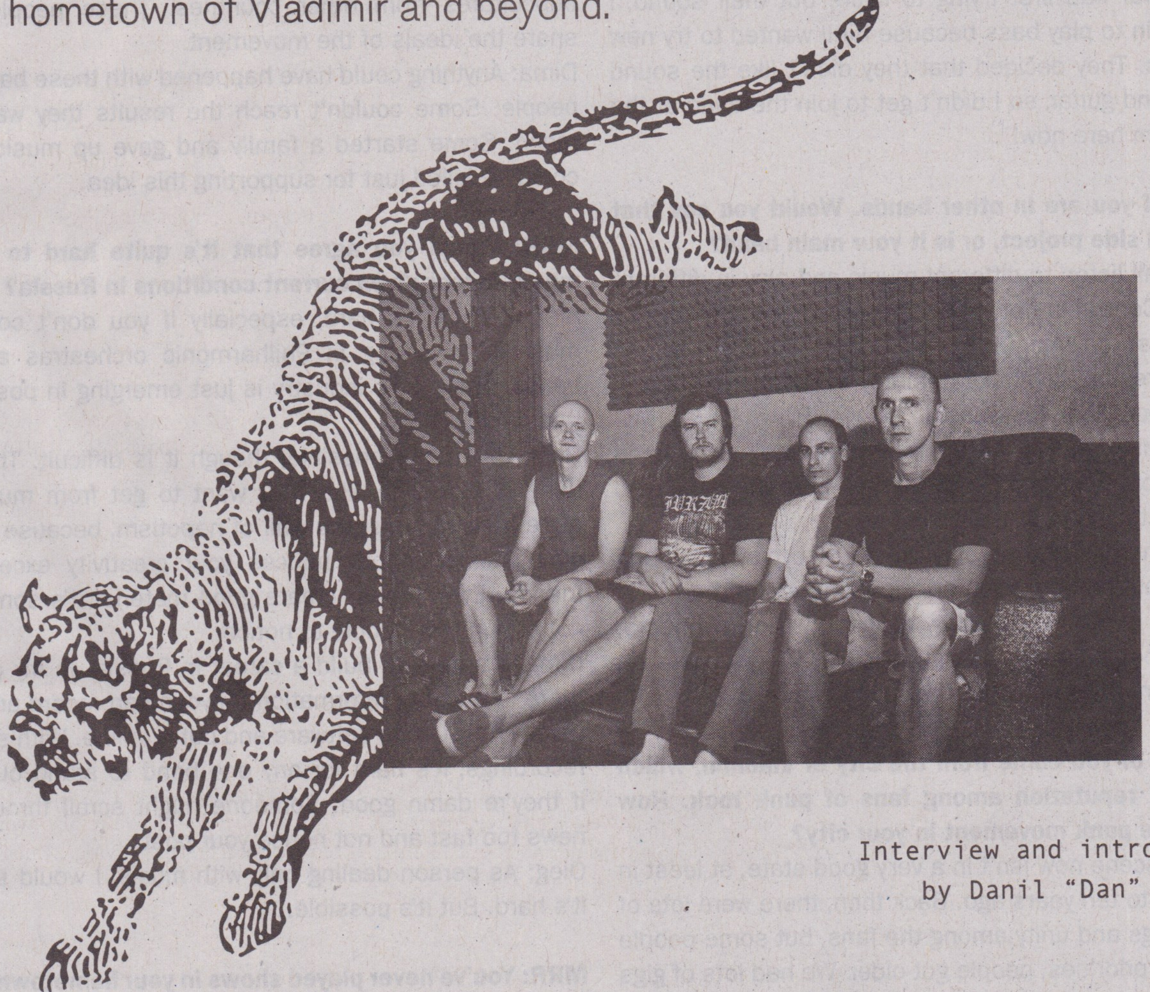
MRR: Do you have a favourite show you've played?
Richard: Bristol?
Oli: Bristol and the Lexington stick out. We played our first show on a stage that sounded really good and there were loads of people at The Lexington with Terry. We were really well prepared for it, and it felt like our band had been going for a while.
Sop: In Bristol, I remember loads of people dancing! Who put it on again?
Richard: Rory did, next to

CENTRAL

In recent years the hardcore movement in Russia has gone through a rough patch, with many bands breaking up in the 2000s and 2010s. But the promising young band Central, which first formed in 2016, released their excellent debut album last year. Now, they are working on a new album and planning future gigs in their hometown of Vladimir and beyond.

You won't find a shorter record in the Russian hardcore scene, but what makes Central great is the succinctness and energy they achieve in their shorter-than-a-minute songs.

CENTRAL
CENTRAL



Interview and introduction
by Danil "Dan" Volohov

CENTRAL

MRR: Let's start from the beginning. How did the band form and when did each of you join?

Denis: I formed Central with Kirill, our former bass player, in 2016. Before Central we'd played together in a number of hardcore bands including Outxset and Rainforced. When we got together for our first rehearsal in 2016, the lineup was different. We wrote our first material at that point, but then the band froze for awhile. In fall 2017, we got together again to continue what we started with a new lineup, and Alex joined the band as our vocalist.

Oleg: I got a message from Denis asking me if I could play drums for a new project, and I said yes, so we started playing together with the bassist Kirill. Then, we had to find a vocalist, which was a problem, because there were no hardcore singers in our city. We tried to play with Pavel, who played with Denis and Kirill in Outset. But after a few rehearsals Pavel left the band. We then asked Alex to join and he accepted the offer! Not so long ago Kirill left the band and Dima replaced him.

Dima: I joined the band a month ago. Kirill plays bass on the debut album. There's actually more to it though. When Central was first trying to figure out their sound, I was called in to play bass because Kirill wanted to try new guitar parts. They decided that they didn't like the sound of the second guitar, so I didn't get to join the band at the time. But I'm here now!

MRR: All of you are in other bands. Would you say that Central is a side project, or is it your main band?

Denis: We all listen to different music and play in different bands but Central is not a side project for me. Personally, I try to invest maximum effort in all the bands I'm in. I'm always interested in music, primarily in hardcore. For me, it's about more than just music.

Alex: My main creative project was and remains the band Rebrovka from Kostroma. With Central, I have the ability to express my thoughts in a different way.

Oleg: Together with Denis and Dima I also play in a band called Us Palm, which is the principal project for me.

Dima: None of us are bound by obligations and contracts. Everyone does whatever is right for him. I try to give an equal amount of time to all of my musical projects.

MRR: Most of you come from the city of Vladimir, which has a good reputation among fans of punk rock. How strong is the punk movement in your city?

Denis: The scene now isn't in a very good state, at least in comparison to ten years ago. Back then, there were lots of people at gigs and unity among the fans, but some people chose other priorities, people got older. We had lots of gigs by foreign bands like Foundation, Last Hope, No Turning Back. Norma Jean visited Vladimir in 2010, which was unreal! I still remember that gig vividly.

Dima: I started going to gigs and actively taking part in the movement in 2010. I had a great time in those early years! There were lots of shows, bands, and places to play. Nowadays, the scene consists of a few enthusiasts who put in the effort to get good bands here for the 20 or 30 people who come to gigs. Our drummer Oleg used to own a recording studio in a cool garage where we would often play gigs. Now there aren't many places where we can play punk rock; all of us are trying to find cool new places.

Oleg: I can't say anything about the situation ten years ago, because I wasn't living in Vladimir then. Recently, some clubs have started to appear in the city for hardcore gigs. There is a crowd of fans going to these gigs regularly, so from this point of view it's quite good.

MRR: As you mention, at the beginning of the 2000s there were a large number of hardcore bands in your scene, but most of these bands have broken up. Why do you think this happened?

Alex: I think some people lacked real commitment. They just decided to take on the role of "hardcores" by copying subcultures from other countries. These people didn't share the ideals of the movement.

Dima: Anything could have happened with these bands and people. Some couldn't reach the results they wanted to reach. Some started a family and gave up music. Some could be killed just for supporting this idea.

MRR: Would you agree that it's quite hard to start a music career given current conditions in Russia?

Alex: I think it's hard, especially if you don't count the musicians working in Philharmonic orchestras and folk bands. The music industry is just emerging in post-Soviet Russia.

Denis: It's quite possible, though it is difficult. The main thing is to define what you want to get from music. It's quite hard to break the wall of nepotism, because without connections nobody notices your creativity except your friends. Even if you create good material it's sometimes not enough for people to notice.

Dima: It's hard to build a career in Russia. In my opinion, there is a glut of information. Anyone can record an album using Fruity Loops software and put it online. With so many recordings, it's hard for any one band to stand out, even if they're damn good. Someone might scroll through the news too fast and not notice your post.

Oleg: As person dealing only with music, I would say yes, it's hard. But it's possible.

MRR: You've never played shows in your hometown before now. Why is that?

Oleg: It just happened that way! Most of the shows we've played have been in Moscow and St. Petersburg.

Dima: We had no space or musicians to play with. But in April we'll play our first show here with bands from Samara and Irkutsk.

MRR: Let's talk about your debut album, which you released in 2018. How hard it was for you to record everything and to get all the ideas together?

Denis: The recording process was quite simple, since all of us had experience working in the studio with different bands. We recorded all the instrumental parts in a few hours. The process took longer than expected because of the vocals. At first, we had Pasha who plays with me in Outxset, but we went our separate ways. No harm done! Though because of this, we had problems with writing lyrics too.

Alex: The way we worked on the record was quite new for me. The guys sent all the demo tracks to me so I could record the vocal parts by myself. Then I sent everything back for approval. Before this, I had always recorded everything collectively.

Oleg: While recording, it didn't take too many tries for us to get the songs down. We just played everything and that's it!

MRR: There are some bands where each member brings his or her ideas to the table. How does Central approach songwriting? Is there a division of responsibilities, or does one person write most of the music?

Denis: The bass player and I bring riffs to rehearsals. If everybody likes the riff, we use them to make full songs. Finally, Alex writes his lyrics. At rehearsal I don't really like to spend time jamming. Of course, sometimes in rehearsals we jam or improvise. But I find that during rehearsal there are more important things than jamming, like preparing for playing live.

Dima: Everyone brings his parts to it. Denis always brings his ideas, which become the core of the material. We all work on arrangements according to our personal styles.

MRR: One of the things that makes your debut record so unique is the short length of the songs. You refuse to have solos, which makes each song about one minute long. Is this a reference to bands like Circle Jerks or Napalm Death?

Alex: For me, it's to not get exhausted while singing [laughter].

Denis: I decided to give up on solos because I don't see any point to them. But we're not alone in our style—there are many bands in Russia with this approach, not only Central. We wanted to make a real hardcore record. We didn't want to sound like all these polished bands. Personally, I love bands like Mindset and F.R.E.E., with their album Ex Tenebris. Listening to these bands you can really feel the rage and honesty. Of course we can't forget about the classics that have influenced us: Minor Threat, Youth Of Today, Gorilla Biscuits, Judge, In My Eyes, etc.

MRR: Not every Russian band sounds like Grazhdanskaya Oborona or DDT, but I've found that there is such a tendency in Russian punk. There are some Russian national features which are quite hard to get away from! Was it hard for you to get away from the Russian tradition?

Alex: Very hard actually! I play gigs wearing a Russian national shirt, with a bottle of vodka in my hands [laughter].

Denis: I've never listened to Grazhdanskaya Oborona, and I don't really want to.

Dima: Conversely, a lot of musicians try to build their sound off of their ideas of the West, trying to get as far away from the tradition of Russian rock as they can without really thinking about what they're doing. Their purpose is to get on federal TV channels and play a show at Red Square some day.

MRR: Your songs are quite pessimistic—you're like the Ivan Bunin of hardcore. This is particularly true if we compare your songs to the lyrics of well-known Russian bands like Chimera, who usually sing about love or something light and positive. Why did you chose this path? Would you say that you're pessimists?

Alex: While writing the lyrics, I wanted to step back from the themes and the narrative style typical of Russian hardcore music. Plus, I've always been influenced by the classics of Russian literature—writers like Chekhov and Dostoevsky, and silver age poets like Gumilyov. It's impossible to sing about the realities of Russian life without negativity.

Dima: I wouldn't call myself a pessimist. I'm just living in a reality where nothing good happens.

Denis: I try to be optimistic, but life continues to surprise me with its negativity. It makes you look for compromises. People can't always be positive. And if they seem that way, it's just a mask, a form of protection from the outside world. But a band should always have a message, especially a hardcore band.

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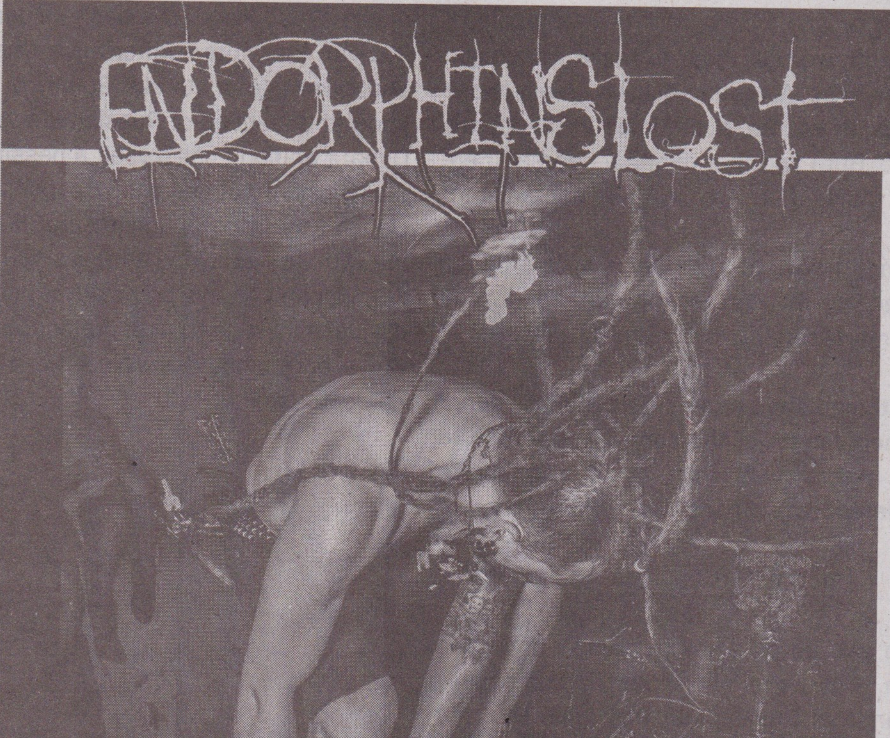

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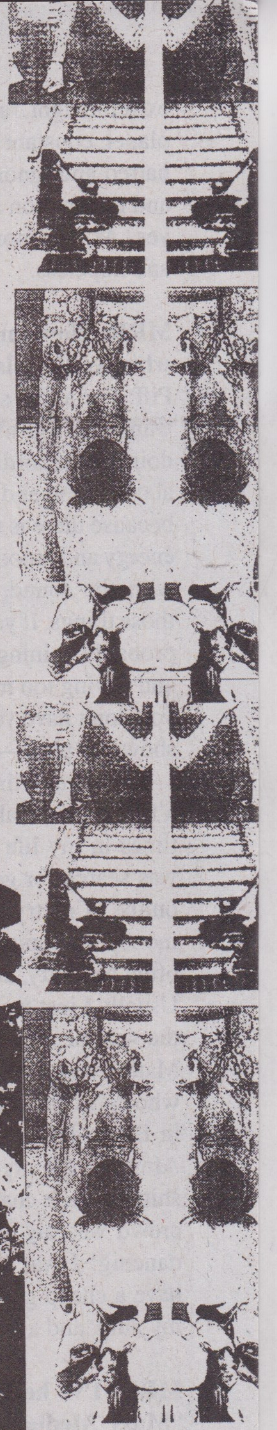
FROM THE HEAD OF ZEUS RECORDS · EVERYWHERE · 2019 · SHORT FAST AND LOUD

IMPULSO

Impulso is a hardcore punk band from Trento, Italy, a dead city in the middle of the northern Italian Alps where punk still means breaking up monotony and apathy. Members of the band have been involved in the local sacene for many years, having played and still playing in bands including Shitty Life, Left in Ruins, Congegno, Sang, Under the Oak, Astio, Crop Circles, and Dadar. Impulso have a self-titled EP on Erste Theke Tontraeger Records, a split tape with Astio, and have toured Europe a few times. Their second EP, Costante Ossessione, is coming out soon on Byllepest Distro, and they will leave for their first tour of the U.S. and Canada in April. Interview and introduction by Lollo and Luoca. Impulso are Leo, Matt, Olly, Piff. Photos provided by Mavi Parra and Pedro Agra.

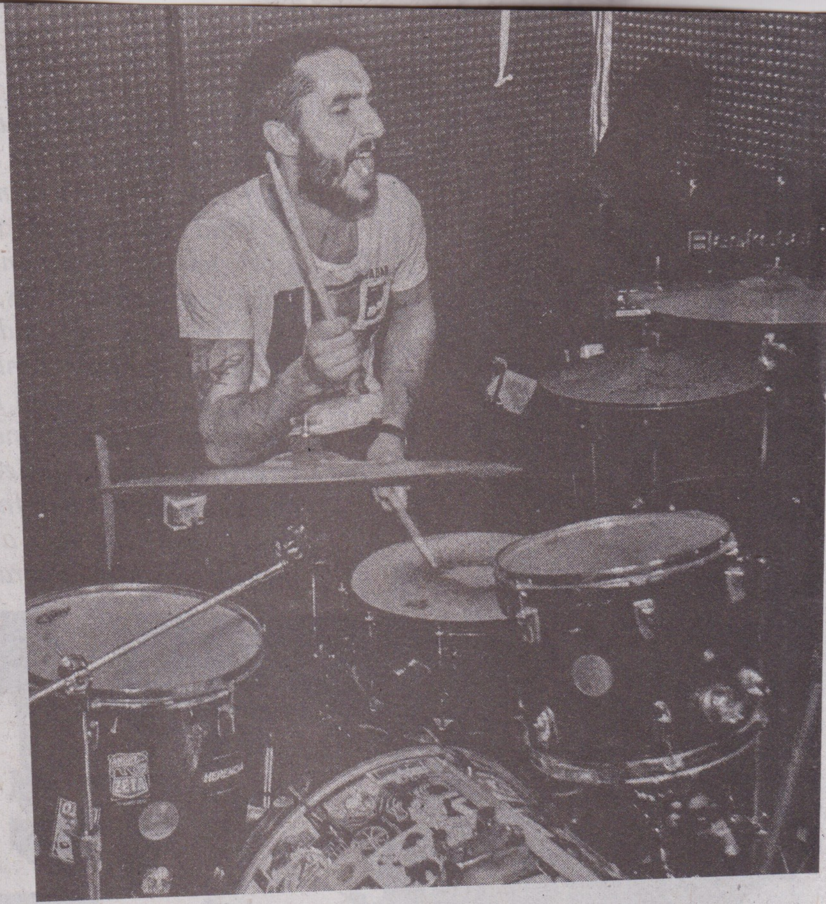


MRR: Tell us about the importance of singing in Italian. Olly's voice sounds much cleaner on the new record—was it a conscious choice to make the lyrics more comprehensible? I'd say they're really depressed and negative.

Piff: I'm finally playing in a band with Italian vocals, which I've almost never done before. I can say for sure that it's harder to write good lyrics in Italian than it is in English, so sometimes singers don't want to do it. Lot of things you would say in punk lyrics sound really dumb in Italian! The direct and in-your-face style of punk lyrics often just doesn't work in Italian; you have to use the language in a different way. English-language readers won't understand, but we've tried to translate some classic punk bands name into Italian, and they all sound fucking dumb! "Sette secondi" [Seven Seconds], "Fronte agnostico" [Agnostic Front]—what the fuck!

Olly: Impulso is the first band in which I sing in Italian. The main reason behind this choice is to express myself 100% without any language gap. It is not easy to write lyrics in Italian—often what I write seems banal or excessively direct—but in the end I can express all my feelings with the right words in a much more personal way. On *Costante Ossessione*, I communicate all my disgust towards the society in which we live. The rise of the

extreme right, rampant racism, total indifference towards the planet, constant prevarication. Everywhere I look I see only hatred and ignorance, and I feel a sense of total impotence and resignation in the face of it. Am I negative? Absolutely yes. At this moment in my life I feel totally disillusioned and hopeless.



MRR: How important is sound and gear for the band when you're playing live?

Piff: For a live show I would say it's important, but I don't wanna be too obsessive about it. I'm the one in the band doing the recording and mixing, so of course I'm passionate about sound and gear. But I don't wanna be overly obsessed because there is stuff way more important than gear, like the energy and mood of the band on stage. If you're too obsessed with the sound, you're probably paying less attention to those things. If you're doing an hour-long soundcheck you're probably ruining everyone's mood. If you're complaining and paying too much attention to a shitty PA or the fact that you don't have your normal setup—like when you travel for shows by plane—it's a pain in the ass.

There was a time when I was too worried about gear; I'm a fucking nerd about amps and gear in general. There were times in my life when the first thing I did in the morning was search for gear on the Italian secondhand marketplace online. I'm trying to detach from that! Punk means no money and unusual places for shows. The live sound will often be shitty, and there's not so much we can do about it! Usually I just try to get the best out of what I have, crank up the volume, and enjoy.

Matt: I was a guitar nerd years ago, but now I play punk so who cares about the sound? We played Nothing Nice to Say in Berlin last year and I played my 130 Euro Stratocaster. After the gig my bandmates said to me, "Your sound is so shitty, please change your guitar." But during the show the crowd was big and crazy, and everyone was moshing and dancing! I was like, "What's wrong with you guys?" If I have a cheap guitar that sounds good, good feedback from my amp, and a delay, I'm OK.

MRR: I've heard you do a tight cover of the awesome "Mass Media" by Indigesti. How important is '80s Italian hardcore to your music?

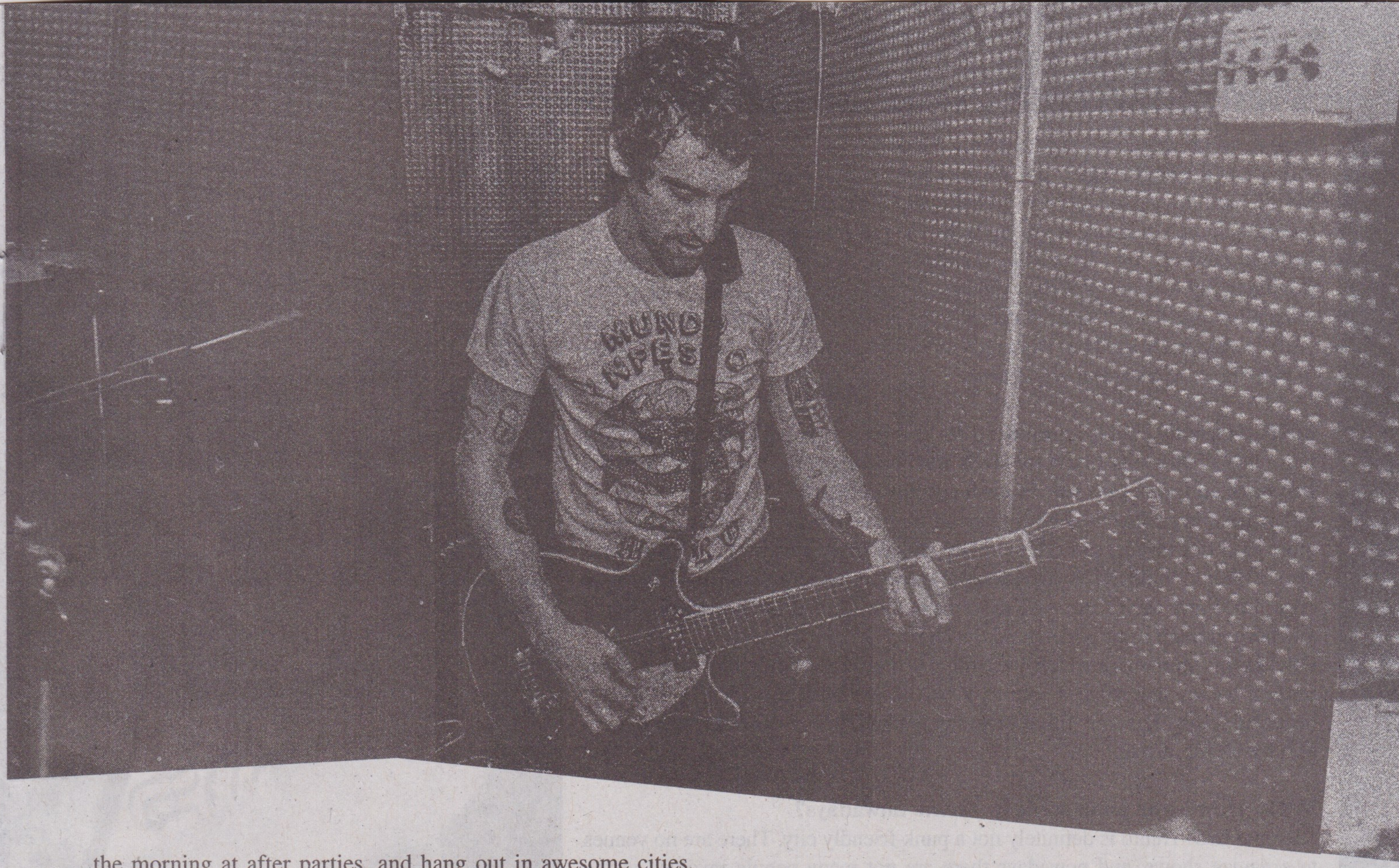
Olly: I grew up on '80s Italian hardcore punk. When I was fifteen or sixteen years old, bands like Wretched, Indigesti, Negazione, and Declino were my daily bread. The sound, the lyrics, and above all the attitude of that era influenced me a great deal. I still remember reading *I Ragazzi Del Mucchio,* a book written by the bassist of Declino and Indigesti, as well as *Costretti a Sanguinare*, a book on the history of Virus (the first punk squat in Italy). I was fascinated by the fact that in that era punk was a threat. It was the daily practice of subversion, a means to deny imposed social norms. In the Italy of the 1980s, the urgency of social struggle merged with the raw sound of hardcore punk to create a scene that still speaks for itself today. I've been profoundly changed by the DIY ethic, the idea that music and art aren't mere consumer goods but a means to express ourselves, and the fact that hardcore punk is more than music (or noise), that it's everyday struggle. So you see, Impulso is quite influenced in both attitude and sound by '80s Italian hardcore. Indigesti's "Mass Media" is our tribute to that era. "Power of illusion to make you stop thinking!"

Piff: '80s Italian hardcore is a big influence for us, especially on the latest 7". In the first years after I discovered punk music, I got really obsessed with '80s Italian hardcore. Now, years later, I'm listening to those records again. For me, what's special about those bands is that their sound was unique and personal. I read an interview with someone in Impact where he said that the early Italian bands tried to copy American bands but didn't usually have the ability to play that way, so what came out was totally different. Although on the other hand, '80s Italian hardcore has become too mythologized, too romanticized. Lots of books, lots of shitty reunions—too much!

Leo: It's what introduced me to this world. I grew up listening to those bands. Impulso has a wide mixture of influences from that era, including in our lyrics. I've played in other bands influenced more or less by old school Italian HC, but I think this is the band that has come closest to mixing that classic sound with current inputs and personal ideas.

MRR: You played some of the best European punk festivals (K-Town, Nothing Nice to Say) last year. Tell us more about them.

Olly: 2018 was a very satisfying year for us. We had the opportunity to play quite a lot and to play some very cool festivals where despite being thousands of miles away from Trento we still felt at home. We can only thank the big punk family. Playing those festivals was simply amazing. We had the chance to see great bands (Muro at K-Town? Simply perfect!), meet lots of super nice people, dance till



the morning at after parties, and hang out in awesome cities. What more can we ask?

Matt: At K-Town I was so excited, but I was also stressed and anxious before the gig. I always feel stressed when I play on big stages; I prefer to stay among the crowd. We had a great gig—the guys from Ungdomshuset are amazing. After we left Copenhagen they sent us a picture with all of them wearing Impulso T-shirts. It made me cry—so cute! We were glad to see and meet Muro and to see bands like Profoss, long live extreme Scandinavian music!

MRR: You're going on a U.S. tour in April—what do you expect from that? If I'm not wrong this is the first time in the States for all of you, right?

Olly: Yes, in April we leave for our first U.S. and Canada tour. We will play a dozen gigs in the northeastern United States, including Damaged City fest in Washington D.C. and three shows in Canada. We can't wait!

Piff: It will be the first time there for every one of us! I don't have any set expectations, I'm just super excited about the opportunity. I look forward to playing basement shows—something that happens rarely here in Europe—meeting new people, seeing great bands, and exploring new places and countries.

MRR: How would you describe your new 7" EP?

Olly: I'm very satisfied with how it turned out. I think it's a perfect summation of what Impulso is right now. It's called *Costante Ossessione*, and will be released in April by Byllepest Distro from Norway thanks to Daniel. And, thanks to Santi from Exotica and Hysteria Records, we will also have a brand new tape including all the songs we've recorded to date including the first EP, the split with Astio, a song released from the *No Spirit* fanzine compilation, and the new EP.

Matt: Dancy—fancy and dirty. It all came so easy, except for the cover. I'm really excited!

MRR: Is Impulso the direct consequence of Left in Ruins? Musically speaking, some of the breakdowns remind me of your previous band, but the music is definitely stronger and noisier.

Olly: I don't think Impulso is a direct consequence of Left in Ruins but it was definitely thanks to LIR that we met and became great friends. We all played in that group, though only once with the four of us together—at the beginning of 2012 we played one show with the current Impulso line-up. It was the last show with Leo on drums and the first with Matt on bass, though in Impulso Matt plays guitar while Piff plays bass.

MRR: Try to imagine yourselves not playing music, being in bands, or being part of the punk scene. What kind of people would you have become? Also, try to imagine yourself in ten years. Will you still be playing in punk bands?

Matt: I lived that kind of life in the past, about three years ago. Without playing music and without a band I was sick. Now, I can't imagine my life in the future without a band, maybe not a punk band but still playing music.

Olly: I would have probably continued my studies and found a stable job. I wouldn't be as anxious about money but I would be living an absolutely boring life. Or most probably I would've become a tekno raver and burned all my neurons. In ten years I

hope to still be playing music with my friends.
Piff: I can't really imagine life without punk and without playing in bands. My life and my personality would be totally different. It's funny you ask this question though, because we recently played the game of imagining ourselves without punk in our lives. We decided I probably would've committed suicide in my teen years, Olly would be a hippie, Leo a redneck living in the mountains, and Matt a "true till death"-type metal head. Imaging myself in ten years is also pretty hard but I'm pretty sure I'll be still passionate and involved in punk in some way. But who knows!

MRR: Recently, *MRR* announced its end as a printed monthly fanzine. Have any of you ever being involved with fanzines? Do you think fanzines still have an important role in underground music?
Piff: I have been involved with zines in the past but never for projects with more than two issues, so nothing really serious. I've always loved print zines even if they don't have as fundamental a role in underground music as they once did. I love the format so I'm so sorry that *MRR* is not gonna be printed anymore, though I can understand the choice.
Olly: In this moment in which everything is digitized I don't think that a paper fanzine has as important a role as it had in the past, though it is always a beautiful fetish. The only thing I can say is thank you to *MRR* for having kept at it for all these years.

MRR: How is the punk scene in Trento nowadays?
Olly and Leo: Trento is definitely not a punk-friendly city. There are no venues to organize shows, and nowadays there are not many people involved in the hardcore punk scene. But over the years, we've managed to create something really cool here. We learned the lesson of DIY and put all our energy and passion into making this city a little more alive. Most of the shows we've organized and still organize are done from scratch, starting by taking back the spaces that have always been denied to us and trying to unite the more music-minded scene with the militant political community. We want every event to not just be simple musical entertainment but to have political content, which is why most of those shows are benefits for various causes. One of the most well-known examples is the festival Rumori dal Lago ("Noises From the Lake"), a totally free DIY festival that brought hundreds of punks from all over Italy to our neck of the our woods for ten years in a row (2007–2017). Unfortunately, the spark has turned off a bit and there is not as much enthusiasm towards punk now, though we are still afloat. Undoubtedly, many people know our small scene because in the past there have been fairly well-known bands that have brought people closer to Trento, creating lasting contacts and bonds. If you are interested we recommend some bands like Grandine, Ludd, Attrito, and Youngblood. You can find some their music on the blog trentohc.blogspot.com.

nessunimpulso.bandcamp.com / nessunimpulso@gmail.com

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April 9: New York | April 10: Baltimore | April 11: New Jersey
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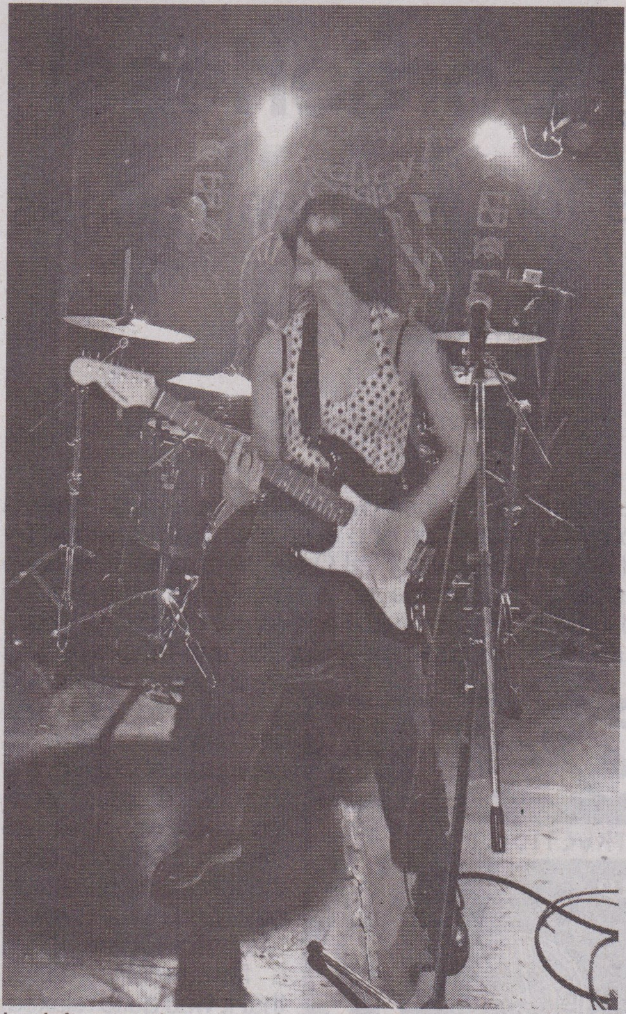
Bratakus / Sedition Japanese Tour with Reality Crisis

Bratakus are:
Breagha (Guitar / Vocals / Diary author)
Onnagh (Bass / Vocals)

Photos by Wojtek/Sanctus Propaganda

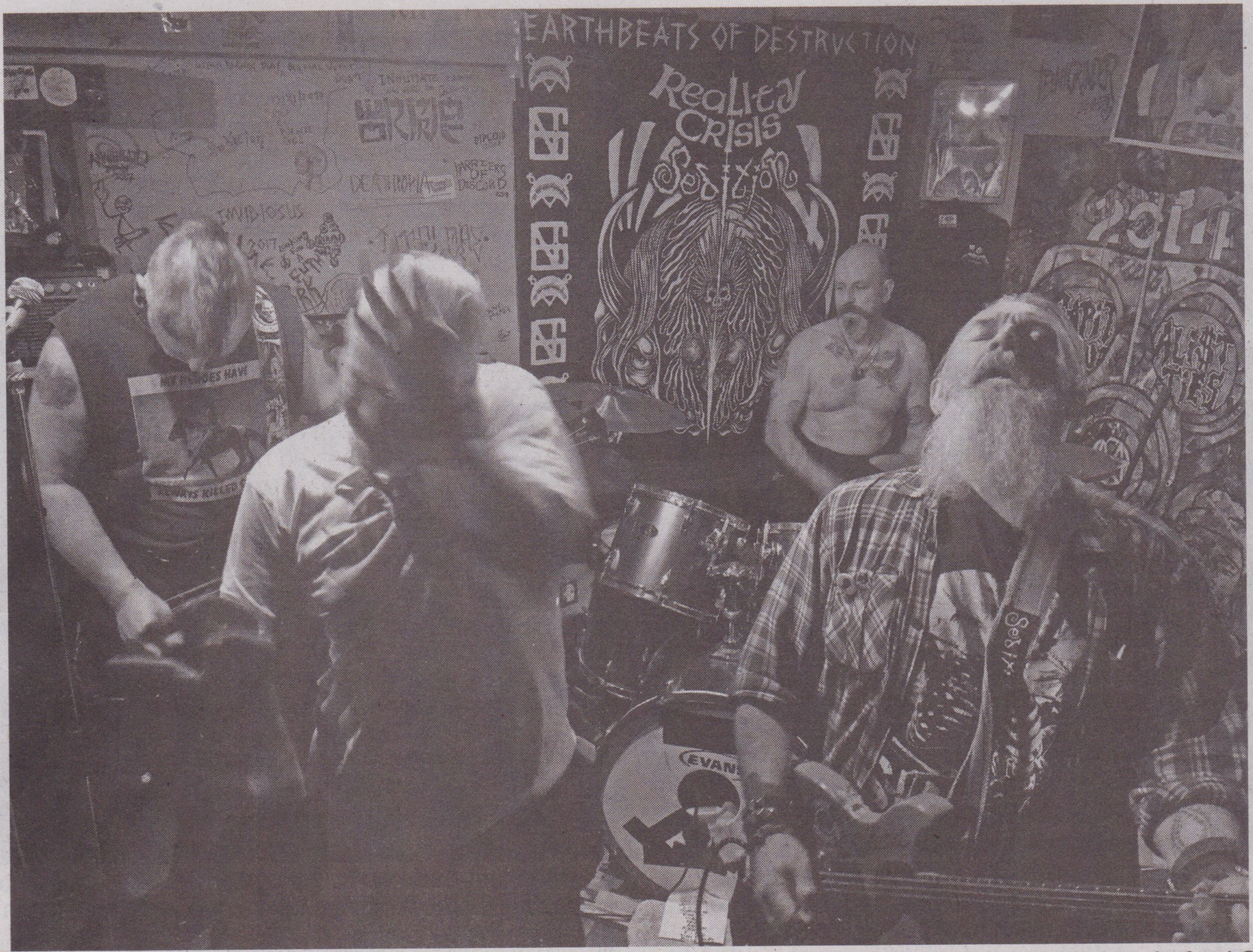
Sedition are:
Angus (Vocals / our Dad)
Billy (Guitar)
Brycey (Bass)
Martin (Drums)

Day One
January 10, 2019
We set off at the reasonable time of 4:30 pm, which was a relief, because I hate having to get up in the middle of the night to go to the airport. We got through security and were all heading to the gate when suddenly we lost Dad. We waited and waited, but couldn't see him anywhere. Eventually he caught up with us. It turns out he had been so busy putting his jackets and stuff back on after he went through security that he just walked away and left his bag lying on the ground and had to go back for it. We're lucky it wasn't incinerated, haha. The first plane from Glasgow to Amsterdam was only about an hour, which was fine. Our next flight was delayed though, so we ended up having to sit in the Amsterdam airport for four hours. Me and Onnagh passed the time watching Hey Qween and eating spring rolls. Eating the spring rolls turned out to be a mistake though because on the next plane they stuffed us full of so much food that I actually felt sick! After a flight of about twelve hours we finally landed in Seoul. I was pretty tired at that point, but the airport in Seoul was so crazy that it kept me awake; there were giant robots walking about and the airport buggies that transport people all blasted an 8-bit version of Bourée in E Minor instead of just beeping to let people know they were coming through. When we finally got on the last plane we were exhausted, and were presented with yet another vegan meal! I actually couldn't even force it down because I was so full!
As soon as the plane touched the ground in Japan almost everyone sprang to their feet and sprinted to the front of the plane. We were really freaked out thinking "Woah, people in Japan really like to get off the plane fast..." it turns out there was actually a famous Korean pop star on the plane and everyone was rushing to try and get a picture with him! Once the excited fans were satisfied and we managed to actually get off the plane and into the airport we just had to get past border control and then we could meet Bunta (Punk Tribe) who was organizing the tour and get back to his house and sleep! I was a bit nervous about going through border control because of all the merch we brought, even though I was reassured by Endless Swarm, who had toured Japan a few months earlier, that it was quite relaxed. Obviously we had to say we were just tourists so we didn't need a work permit, so I was worried that if our bags were searched then it was a bit far-fetched to say that we had brought around eighty t-shirts in three different designs and all different sizes, as well as vinyl and CDs and stuff just as "gifts" for friends in Japan.
Brycey went first and his bag was instantly searched—they went through absolutely every one of his possessions. Lucky he didn't have any merch in his bag, but he was still being searched when they called me, Onnagh and Dad up. They asked us a few questions and then just let us through, we couldn't believe it! We had three cases full of merch and they didn't even look through one! Once we were through we had to wade through a sea of fans waiting to get a picture of the Korean pop star and when we finally made it out we found Bunta, Tetsuo (Reality Crisis) and Hiro (Punk Tribe Brothers) waiting for us. After we said our hellos we asked them where Billy and Martin were, as we were sure they had come through security before us. They said they



hadn't seen them, so a couple of people went to check the smoking room and the toilets, but they were nowhere to be found.
A few minutes passed and Brycey was finally let through, he said he saw Martin being pulled into a little room because of his vape. They thought it was for smoking some form of drugs and he was saying "No! It's fruit! Fruit flavor to help you stop smoking!" Once he was in the room there were apparently several border cops all around him shouting and pointing at pictures of various drugs asking if that's what the vape was for. He had to keep saying "No" and trying to explain what it actually was, then they went through his bag and unfolded every one of the "ACAB: All Countries Are Borderless" t-shirts that we had brought to sell at gigs. He was really scared 'cause that's not really a message you want border police to see you have on a t-shirt, but they just said "Nice design" and folded them back up. They didn't even question why he had so many or anything. Once he was let out we were just waiting for Billy, who Martin had seen being pulled into a room too. He also had a vape, so we assumed it was just for that, but as time went by we got a bit worried because it was taking so long and we had no way of contacting him.
After about 15–20 minutes he finally emerged and we all breathed a sigh of relief! It turns out he was pulled aside because he had put his occupation as "coffee shop manager" and because he had just come via Amsterdam that day they got suspicious when they found his vape and like Martin, he was also questioned about it. He had all the Sedition merch in his bag, taped up with the sizes written on them, and they unravelled each and every one to check if there were drugs hidden inside them. They were the most polite border police in the world though, and once they had searched them they apologized and folded them all up again and put them neatly back in Billy's bag.
Once we were all reunited I couldn't wait to get back to Bunta's and sleep, but then I got the news that we were going to have to get up at 5:00 am (it was now 11:00 pm) so that we were ready in time to leave for Tokyo at 6:00 am, because we had to be at the gig really early. I was horrified since I hadn't really slept since setting off, but the jetlag actually helped me and it wasn't that bad getting up. Before we went back to Bunta's, he took us to his friend's cafe where Billy, Brycey, and Martin were going to be staying and his friends had made us veggie burgers and sweetcorn chowder. Even though it was around midnight Japanese time by then, it was so delicious that we all ate every bite, despite having had eaten about six meals in the past twenty-four hours already! I have never been more full in my life. Very, very full and tired, we went back to Bunta's to get a few hours rest.

Day Two



January 11, 2019

That morning we headed back to the cafe to meet the others and then we all set off for Tokyo, stopping only to buy strange flavors of juice and rate the fancy toilets with heated seats in service stations. When we arrived it instantly started raining and as we stood on the street waiting for Bunta to get the keys for the place we were staying that night we were shooed away from shopfronts as we tried to keep from getting wet. When Bunta came back and showed us where we were staying we realized it was one bed short. Our Dad volunteered himself to sleep on the thin dirty looking rug on the floor and let the rest of us have the beds. He used a huge puffy coat of Brycey's to turn the rug into more of a mattress and his bed for the night was sorted! We then headed to the venue, which was huge! There was a long soundcheck where a lot of time was spent trying to get across to the sound engineers that we wanted the drum machine really loud in our monitors but not as loud out front, whilst not being able to speak Japanese. Bunta eventually came to the rescue to translate for us. It had now been almost two days with four hours of sleep and I had to avoid sitting down so I didn't just pass out!

Finally it was time for the first band to go on. I went into the main part of the venue and enjoyed sets from Systematić Death, Life, Pile Driver, and Reality Crisis. During Reality Crisis I was so exhausted that I actually fell asleep standing up a few times, even with raging punk blasting out in my face and endless crowd surfing going on around me! That has never happened to me before! One thing that struck me and Onnagh about the gig was that it started pretty early in comparison to gigs in the UK, but the venue filled up instantly and the crowd were enthusiastic from the first band, to the last. They didn't take three bands just to warm up like back home. Onnagh said she kept looking around at people crowd surfing, screaming words along, and dancing and thinking "I can't believe it's only 6:30 pm..."

By the time it was our turn to play I was very concerned that I wasn't going to be able to put any energy into our set, but somehow we managed to get through it without drifting off to sleep, haha. It helped to have a good friend of ours Kosuke (AWEN DIY Products) in the front row, singing along with our songs. He also did our merch for us for pretty much the whole gig and it was the most organized our merch table has ever been! Once we were off the stage it was time for Sedition. The crowd went absolutely crazy when they started playing, and were even shouting "One more song!" when they were only about three songs in to their set! When they played their cover of "Police Story" as their last song a woman beside us who had been quite calm throughout their whole set, just nodding along, actually put her hands on her face and screamed with joy. Afterwards it was even more crazy, Sedition sold almost all the merch they brought at that first gig, took so many pictures with people, and were even given gifts. When it was finally time to go back to the place we were sleeping, we realized that we hadn't

actually eaten anything since lunchtime, and that was probably why we were all feeling as bad as we were. We tried to find Bunta to ask him where we could get something to eat, and when we found him we saw that he had already bought us some food like the diamond he is—instant noodles, seitan and crisps no less!

Day Three
January 12, 2019

I got up early so I could have a shower since I hadn't been able to wash properly for a few days. The place we were staying was freezing, so I was really looking forward to a hot shower to warm me up. To my horror when I got in the water was ice cold! I decided I was already committed to it by the time I was in, so had to just grit my teeth and get on with it. I may never fully recover from how cold that water was though.

Bunta got us some Onigiri (balls of sticky rice flavored with all kinds of delicious things, my favorite kind had wasabi in the middle and was wrapped in a sheet of nori) for breakfast, which were sooo good! We ended up eating about a million of them during our stay in Japan. Then it was off to Yokohama. The venue that night was much smaller than the night before, didn't have a stage, and was covered in graffiti from all the bands that had played there in the past (including some from our pals Endless Swarm who had played there last year). It was definitely my favourite venue we played. The only problem was that the toilet door was opposite the stage, so once the venue filled up and people were standing watching the bands, it was actually impossible to get in there! That night we played with Rocky and the Sweden, Order, and of course Reality Crisis and Sedition. Reality Crisis were the first band on and they somehow managed to stage dive for most of their set even though there wasn't a stage in the venue!

That night we actually met a Scottish guy and an Irish guy who had been living over in Japan teaching English, and it turned out the Scottish guy, before moving, had been part of the Glasgow punk scene and knew a lot of the same people as us, and had even seen us play a few times. It's a small world! When he introduced himself to us he said "This is the first time I've heard my own accent in months." After the gig was over we were encouraged by the owners of the venue to write our band name on the wall, and then told to do it again cause they thought we did it too small! Once the gear was loaded back in the vans, we set off back to Nagoya, which was supposed to be a two hour journey, so we were hoping to be back by 2:00 am and have a decent rest. We didn't get back till 4:00 am!!

Day Four
January 13, 2019

In the morning we went downstairs and there was an enormous feast of Japanese vegan food laid out for us that Bunta and his lovely wife Aya had made. We couldn't believe it. There was radish soup, sticky rice, tofu, seitan, and more. We quickly stuffed ourselves then went to meet the others.

The venue was on the fifth story of a huge building, which was great for loading gear (luckily there was a lift, but it didn't go all the way up) and had some of the most efficient sound engineers we've ever met. We finished our soundcheck and I turned round and they had already unplugged all my cables and were coiling them for me!

It was a strange experience. Our friend Kosuke came again and brought loads of delicious fresh strawberries with him, and again offered his excellent merch stall managing abilities!

Turtle Island opened the night; it was so cool to see them again. I saw them play ages ago at Glastonbury Festival and was blown away by them, so I was pretty excited to be playing a gig with them and they did not disappoint! Afterwards I was left thinking "Wow, how can you follow that?" And then Reality Crisis showed us how! They started their set with the stage lit so you could only see their silhouettes standing in epic poses, as William Wallace's Freedom speech from Braveheart played, when that ended they burst into their song "Stay Free." It was total genius. The rest of the night was Disgust, then us, then Order, followed by Sedition. Every band was so amazing and the whole night felt really special. One crazy thing we found out is in Japan it's illegal to smoke on the street because of the pollution, and legal to smoke in venues. As someone who doesn't smoke, by this gig I could barely breathe.

Day Five
January 14, 2019

This was our day off. That morning we had another delicious breakfast prepared for us and took our time eating it and hanging out with Bunta's family. Then, Bunta, Hiro, and Bunta's daughter Azu took us shopping for souvenirs. Brycey bought his son an umbrella that had the handle of a Samurai sword, which was confiscated when he tried to get on the plane with it because they said it looked too much like a weapon, even though it was clearly an umbrella! Then at night, a few of us went for a traditional Japanese meal with Bunta's family, including his parents! The meal was amazing, and it was great to do something that was so full of Japanese culture since we hadn't been able to do a lot of sightseeing yet.

Day Six
January 15, 2019

This was the day of our last gig in Japan, but before that, we had a lovely day with Bunta and Azu at a beautiful traditional Japanese garden, and then a really interesting museum of Japanese history which focused on the Samurai period and traditional Japanese calligraphy. It was so nice to actually get to do some touristy stuff, because usually there isn't time for that when you're on tour, but to come all the way to Japan and not at least see a bit of it seemed crazy. When we got to the venue that evening we rejoiced because you weren't allowed to smoke in it! This was the first time we'd been in a no smoking venue since we got to Japan. Finally we could breathe at a gig again! I was a bit worried 'cause Sedition weren't playing this one and we were headlining. We aren't really well known in Japan, so it was a bit nerve wracking to be the headliners. We soundchecked then sat around eating seaweed flavored crisps waiting for the doors to open. After a while Martin and Brycey started to feel very ill and ended up lying on the floor wrapped in jackets for the whole night. Lucky they weren't playing! We still don't really know what was wrong with them, but whatever it was hit them very fast and full on. Not ideal on their last night in Japan. That night the line up was only bands with drum machines and we played with: Punk Tribe Brothers, Unskilled Labo & Hiro Vicious and the Pig Youth Experience.

After Unskilled Labo's set, we were taken into a backstage room and there was a whole table set up for a sit down meal. May, the woman who owned the venue, had cooked us about 800 courses of incredible vegan food. It was amazing, but also very strange to be sitting down at a table eating a full multi-course meal in the middle of a gig. Once I was so stuffed I could barely move we went out to catch the last half of Hiro Vicious's set. Then, it was our turn to go on. My earlier worries were fortunately unnecessary because there were actually loads of people there to see us (phew!) and the gig was really great fun. Afterwards we stuck around for ages hanging out with people, not really wanting it all to end. Reality Crisis then assured us that it was not over as they had plans to come back to the UK and then get us all back over to Japan again. Whether that happens or not, I already feel so lucky to have been able play in Japan, meet so many amazing people and have this whole experience, it was unlike anything we've ever done as a band before.

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Infinite Resignation
Eugene Thacker
Repeater Books, 2018
397 pgs | $17.95

"At first I had planned to write a book about pessimism, a clearly written, judiciously researched history, with names and dates and titles of obscure books few have bothered to read. But it seemed so tedious, and not worth the effort. Not that this is better, of course." This confession comes near the end of "On Pessimism," the 240-page first section of Eugene Thacker's *Infinite Resignation*, and despite his wry effacement, the book's ultimate form paints a far more compelling portrait of pessimism than any rigorous history could. Divided into two sections, *Infinite Resignation* comprises "On Pessimism"—a deluge of aphorisms, observations, personal anecdotes, and poetic musings that add up to a monumental, idiosyncratic meditation on pessimism—and "The Patron Saints of Pessimism," a hagiography of the key pessimist thinkers referenced in the first section, from Cioran to Montaigne to Schopenhauer.

Infinite Resignation isn't a treatise, systematic analysis, or argument. Like many of his pessimist forebears, Thacker holds both philosophy and literature at arm's length, drawing from each in equal measure, and never fully crossing the line into either. In exploring Giacomo Leopardi's opus *Zibaldone*, Thacker describes "a massive, heterogenous treasure trove of aphorisms, diary entries, essays in miniature, observations and meditations, literary criticism, anecdotes, parables, quotations from other poets, and stray fragments of popular songs," and this could just as easily describe *Infinite Resignation* itself—a surprisingly enjoyable maelstrom of philosophical melancholy, pitch-black humor, and evocative lyricism.

In the same way that punk took up the three-chord, two-minute song as its primary invective, pessimistic writing takes the aphorism. The aphorism denies any attempt at argument, intent on hurling pithy truism, as Cioran writes, "like an insult." Short, focused, and often poison-tipped, the aphorism doesn't stick around while its target formulates a counterpoint; it gets in, does its damage, and runs. Like Nietzsche or Schopenhauer, Thacker uses the aphorism to great effect, each pared-down passage a stiletto slipped between the ribs. The text of "On Pessimism" continually makes an argument for its own form, returning several times to the idea that writers don't finish books so much as walk away from them. For the pessimist, completion and fulfillment are myths; the aphorism may be meticulously sharpened, but its brevity allows the writer to quickly abandon it.

It's purely subjective nature makes writing about *Infinite Resignation*'s form far easier than explicating its content. Thacker characterizes pessimism as less a philosophy than an attitude, approach, or—most evocatively—a *bad mood*. It comes before analysis, before theory, before philosophy. Thacker opens the book with nearly twenty pages of reasons why pessimism is an unhelpful, philosophically dubious outlook, doomed to crumble under its own weight. But that ultimate failure is hard-coded into pessimism from the start, even for its champions. "I am a pessimist," Thacker admits, "except when writing about pessimism." How could an outlook founded on inevitable failure ever hope to declare any kind of victory?

Thacker has written about black metal in past works—in particular his 2011 exploration of philosophy and supernatural horror, *In the Dust of this Planet*—and at points the startling vehemence of "On Pessimism" recalls the manifestos written by infamous black metal musicians like Ildjarn and Varg Vikernes. But where those stunted screeds devolve into self-aggrandizement and nationalist bigotry, Thacker refines his misanthropy into a sustained sigh, a sort of seething disappointment. And in "The Patron Saints of Pessimism," he carefully recognizes the exclusivity of his failed pantheon, its figures "often enmeshed in the very sites of privilege that they either refuse or fail to live up to." In the same paragraph he suggests a sort of intersectional pessimism; "pessimism belongs to everyone," he writes, "simply by virtue of undergoing the burden of being." Thacker's pessimism operates on a cosmic scale, viewing the entirety of human history as a miniscule aberration; in this context, cultural differences mean less than nothing.

As much as I liked *Infinite Resignation*, it wasn't an easy read: a book-length meditation on the futility of life, the inevitability of death, and the meaningless of both pairs miserably with seasonal depression. But there's something comforting about wallowing with Thacker in his melancholic rumination, feeling what he describes as "an ecstasy of the worst." Even at its darkest nadir, *Infinite Resignation* never takes us beyond familiarity; we've all felt this way before, and not for the last time. "I've managed to make pessimism a form of therapy," Thacker writes, and I *get it*. Sometimes it's good to feel bad.

—Mark Wadley

Out of the Ruins: The Emergence of Radical Informal Learning Spaces
Ed. Haworth & Elmore
PM Press, 2017
288 pages | $24.95

Out of the Ruins is a collection of painstakingly researched and heavily annotated scholarly essays that criticize the academe yet are largely inaccessible to anyone outside of it. One of the Editors, Robert H. Haworth, in the introduction writes, "punk provided me with a counter-narrative to my formal education." He mentions the impact Crass and zines had on his learning and discusses the tension between his formal education and punk's "different way of knowing and interacting with the world." All this sounded familiar to me. Like many of us, I'm a punk who rejected formal education early in high school and returned to community college, eventually enrolling in a university after age 30. At fourteen, part of the great appeal of punk was the vibrant intellectual community I discovered in the Bay Area—I was thrilled to realize a different, underground, exciting, and illicit education was possible. Now, a high school English teacher, I am deeply ambivalent about the institutions I teach in, and the ways formal education, which many of us found so profoundly alienating and humiliating as teenagers, hasn't changed much.

But after the introduction, the book takes a different turn. Section two is called "Constructing Theoretical Frameworks for Educational Praxis." This isn't a how-to book. You're not going to learn how to build a skill-sharing network here. You won't find it on the shelf next to

Unfuck Your Life. Their hearts are in the right places, of course, as they suggest, "radical informal learning would be an ongoing process and geared toward freedom, autonomy, critical reflection, and liberation rather than supporting hierarchical, authoritarian, and economically corrupt institutions and relationships." Well, who could argue with that? Isn't that what punks have been doing for decades through our own radical, informal learning spaces, community centers, and clubs? The smartest people I knew were, and still are, the autodidacts who teach themselves and each other, what they want and need to know, and there is some interesting history about free schools here. But there's nothing new in ideas like social centers are spaces created for "giving us space to breathe, take action, and experiment with managing our own lives collectively." They "come from a demand for spaces for radical political debate and action, meetings, eating together, grassroots music, mutual support, information and skill sharing…" yeah, no shit.

How the ideas in *Out of the Ruins* are ever going to reach the street is hard to see. It is clearly a conversation by and for academics. I'm not suggesting they should dumb it down for the peasant,s but jeez, I've been inside the academy and I've read plenty of Freire and Fanon, but this book wasn't meant for me. If you're into dense anarchist and ed theory, it might be for you.

—Anna Brown

Paul Take the Form of a Mortal Girl
Andrea Lawlor
Rescue Press, 2017
354 pgs | $18.00

It's the early 1990s. You're Paul Polydoris. Twenty-two-year-old college student. You're hyper-sexual and exotic-looking in a way people just can't put a finger on. Eater of ideas, film, books, aesthetics, and music. Wanderlust sends you from New York City to Iowa City, Provincetown, Chicago, San Francisco. You're snotty and queer. You can morph your physical sex by will alone.

I'm unqualified to critique Paul Takes the Form of a Mortal Girl. This polymorphic debut bildungsroman by Andrea Lawlor, nonbinary person who uses the third person pronoun, college writing professor, and published poet inhales mid-1990s subculture and exhales LGBTQ theory. I have no formal training in queer or gender theory. I am a cisgender female and self-identify as a woman. I was born in the mid 1980s, so I remember the early 1990s as a child would. I can't review this novel through any rhetorical or historical lens. I just don't have the chops.

What I do have is a taste for energetic writing on previously unexplored topics, and Lawlor brings it. Part queer manifesto, part science fiction, and part absurdist existential drama, they utilize pastiche, gay camp, and a strong sense of a time and a place to create a queer world searching to break free from the shackles of normalcy. For the uninitiated, such as myself, the topic of queerness is put on in such a way that it's not the only lens in which to understand the characters. This novel is character driven, not theory-driven. As long as Paul remains accessible, his fact-of-matter queerness is taken for granted. But when queerness is highlighted, when Paul polymorphs into Polly, his tongue-in-cheek mortal girl form, it's a distinct perspective. This is especially true when coupled with the early '90s radical scene. For those of us who weren't active or alive in the early '90s, don't fret. There's enough name-dropping to familiarize yourself with a quick internet search so you don't feel left out.

Paul exists deep within third-wave feminism and queer activism in the age of Riot Grrrl, zines, and homemade cassette mixtapes. He is a sexually liberated radical queer in every sense of the phrase. Extremely aware of his erotically-charged presence, he uses it to his full advantage, amusement, and astonishment. There are screenings of John Waters's films, treatises on Linda Evangelista in the "Faith" video, ACT UP events in New York City, and waxing poetic on topics like the connotation of female-fronted bands covering songs originally by male-fronted bands without changing the male pronouns in the lyrics: "the best cover songs fuck with genders."

When Paul polymorphs for the first time into Polly it's because he "needs to know what fucking is like for girls." He flatters himself when drunk guys catcall him and graphically fucks a shiny-black-dildo welding guitarist of a "[punk] dyke band from Seattle." Paul wonders if he is a feminist as he wipes his vulva after urinating. Throughout the novel Paul switches back and forth from his physically-sexed-male form to his physically-sexed-female form, even going so far as to remain a woman for almost a year in order to sustain a relationship with Diane, a collectivist vegan activist and gold-star lesbian.

Not only can Paul change his physical sex, but he can change his appearance ever so slightly when it benefits him to do so. As Polly, he can make his breasts smaller or bigger depending on what he thinks will play better with lesbians or straight men. As Paul, he grows the girth of his cock in men's lavatories or shrinks his frame to appear unassuming. A great delight ensues in these choices, and his chosen body is meticulously clothed just-so to match the perfect persona Paul is forever cultivating in his mind.

An origin story is hinted at through the inclusion of short pieces of writing other than the straight narrative that Lawlor intersperses throughout the novel amongst the descriptions of sex, outfits, and job duties. These read as if they loosely relate to poly(Polly)genderism: a short science fiction screenplay about a gay boy on Grecian holiday bitten by a radioactive, sex-morphing eel; a myth of a fisherman who falls in love with a mysterious woman from the sea only for her to disappear when he benevolently tries to civilize her. Robin, Paul's dark-eyed polymorphic counterpart, adds another layer to the mystery as the experienced and thoughtful sex-shifter to Paul's spasmodic morphing just for kicks.

Lawlor wraps up this world-within-a-world of polymorphism and LGBTQ culture in a thick blanket of surreal absurdity. Their characters almost seem too shallow to even exist, but that just means they're based on real people. In order to gauge his hotness, Paul in mortal boy form collects the numbers he receives from gay men in an empty food jar towards the logic of "the fuller the jar, the hotter he [is]." Jane, the fashionable lesbian liberal arts graduate student comrade in arms, complains she has to complete her film studies dissertation under a lesbian medievalist who "considers Film a passing fad." Great profundity, "like understanding one of Foucault's sentences," is given to a would-be gay male lover's outfit, a purple jacket with green jeans, that shouldn't have worked, but does. Triviality is a given in this queer world and acts as a sort of filter for the hardened underbelly in which Paul/Polly exists.

Hints of the hard realities of gay and queer life are throughout this world of silly and sensual queerness. Loved ones dying of AIDS, the murders of "hiking lesbians," a possible reference to the 1988 killing of Rebecca Wright given the novel's time frame, and Paul's growing isolation and detachment from the world are catalysts, not roadblocks. The risk of going out into the world at large as openly gay Paul or as openly female Polly doesn't prevent the morphs, even though Paul knows he'll further alienate himself from reality. Fear of the unknown excites Paul. It's pathology that makes him try even harder to dig into what makes himself and the people around him sexually tick.

There's an attempt at to "fuck with genders" in *Paul Take the Form of a Mortal Girl* that I can't put my finger on. The use of the male pronouns for Paul despite whatever genitalia and clothing he's sporting at any particular moment gives the story a voyeuristic flavor. Initially, it feels stereotypical, as if the only way a man could understand what it is like to be a woman is through fucking and living outwardly as a woman and not to recognize her as an individual independent of the sex act or physical sex itself. There is a distinct change during the polymorphs: Polly is submissive, warm emotion to Paul's assertive, cool detachment. I think the whole point of this piece is to move past

these binaries. Lawlor's attempts at reconciling the two halves of the whole through the eyes of a polymorphic tragic blasé dandy is what you get.

Paul Takes the Form of a Mortal Girl is a clever, campy, and complex throwback machine that moves in and out of sex and theory until both are one and the same. The writing is legit fast and fun. Lawlor leaves enough breadcrumbs for those of us not actively involved in the queer scene to follow along. Whether you're part of the initiated, a mortal girl, a mortal boy, or a polymorph, Paul's got something he wants to show you and he aims to please.

—Christy Olsen

Thee Collected Cyanide Milkshake
Liz Suburbia
Gimme Action, 2018
176 pages | $19.95

Liz Suburbia has been making comics for years now and has released a few books already, but this is my first exposure to her work...and I feel like a fucking idiot for not paying attention sooner. *Cyanide Milkshake* is released by the phenomenal Bay Area imprint Gimme Action, run by the phenomenal Janelle Blag. (Hi Janelle!) This book collects all seven issues (minus the embarrassing "lost" first issue) of Suburbia's self-published zine as it makes its way through fake ads, the lives of dogs gone bad, classifieds, unbridled horniness during the zombie apocalypse, and so much more.

Suburbia's drawing style is stark: black sharpie on plain white paper, nothing fancy, but the time and effort that went into the stories as the zine progressed over the years is obvious. Stylistically, her drawing style at the basest levels could be compared to Mitch Clem or Ben Snakepit, but this is only because of the Sharpie on paper aspect. She drew these comics in a rush with no real thoughts towards longevity, which makes the whole tone feel more immediate and gives it the same energy as some of your favorite punk songs.

Okay, I've given you the basics. Let's get down to the real shit. I'm terrified to write this review because I'm not sure if I can convey exactly how hilarious, perfect, raunchy, and fun this entire collection really is. I read it in my favorite café and outright guffawed so many times...I laughed until I was shaking and tears were streaming down my face, which is the best sign of a great comic. Also, any fucker with a poop joke can make you laugh, but the ones that really hook you in and keep you there show their vulnerability and strength. They make you care about what is happening on the page in front of you. Suburbia's characters Bruce and Kim reappear throughout the book in their ongoing drama of learning to live together as exes during the zombie apocalypse. The storyline is raunchy and truly compelling. The comic timing is impeccable. I found myself getting really caught up in the drama of the story and being pissed as fuck that they are *still having to deal with the fucking cops, even though the world is ending!!!* Besides that story, there are also the ongoing lives of her dogs, which is hilarious and cute. I'm a sucker for made up classified ads, one-off low-brow jokes, creative ways of dealing with harassment, and explanations of celebrity sex dreams. Also, Suburbia adds an intro (or outro) to each issue that mirrors how a lot of us feel about sharing our art with the public. It's fucking scary, but she encourages you to do the same. She writes about punk in the ways that still feel so relevant and vital. Like, we found this fucking thing because we don't feel at home in the straight world and now all the straights are selling us off and we're just fucking letting them do it. I'm being vague. That's fine. Just read this. Just trust me that it rules.

Liz Suburbia has created a world of wonder and hilarity that I truly enjoy. I think you will enjoy it too. I don't know a whole hell of a lot about comics, but I feel like she sits squarely in the ranks of tough, funny, genius women who have a knack for making you laugh like a fucking dumbass in public. Do you like Dori Seda, Julie Doucet, and Janelle Blarg? The three of them have different styles, but occupy a similar space that feels perfect in the world of comics. Liz Suburbia fits in there quite nicely as well.

—Greg Harvester

Fade Into You
Nikki Darling
Feminist Press, 2018
186 pages | $16.95

The literary canon deprives girlhood of the seriousness enjoyed by (pardon the verb choice) the existential anguish of adolescent males. The novel is a fictionalized account of the author's own adolescence. Fictional Nikki experiments with drugs, counterculture, and cutting class. A latchkey kid with disengaged parents, she lashes out at her friends and pushes the line to see where it is, at home and at school. The writing is reminiscent of slam poetry at times without being maudlin or self-serious. The book is equal parts a coming-of-age poem and a love letter to Los Angeles. The story is planted in the '90s, with scattered references to cultural touchstones—the novel openings with the author listening to Jane's Addiction on her Walkman and the book's title is borrowed from Mazzy Star's biggest song. The protagonist has friendships form, fall apart, and reform with high school flippancy. Nikki doesn't seem to want to transgress—she just wants someone to care if she does. Her selfishness is motivated by an interest in forming bonds with other people. Deciding whether to save herself, she hopes someone else will do it for her. She wants to be allowed to push away and still be loved, the kind of love a family ought to provide. Her parents expect the same level of maturity and effort from her as she expects from them—a difficult standard to meet as a child.

She reckons with complications of mixed identity (Chicana and white) without the moorings of a stable home life. The fictional Darling and her friends talk about being the right kind of Mexican. The Chicano characters discuss their relationship with their heritage. Some are more at ease with it than others. Nikki feels neither white nor Mexican enough. The narratives avoid a typical hero's arc: the character begins and ends with many of the same flaws. There are few if any victories. Concrete growth or accomplishments usually mark a hero's journey. Nikki rejects the opportunities she encounters, physically running from them at times. She's a theater brat living her goal of attending Los Angeles County High School for the Arts, yet she cannot force herself to attend class. Even on the days she goes to school, she peels off before the day is over. The novel explores how teenage sexuality is explored on a stage, complicated by the indiscretion of classmates. A revelation at the end of the book feels a little dry—perhaps it would have been effective with more foreshadowing.

The book is a quick read. Not divided into chapters, I found myself continuing to read on. It wasn't that it was a single day in a run-on sentence a-la-Ulysses; the pieces just flow into one another. The voice in this novel is straight out of a first-person punk/New Narrative handbook, despite the mention of Jane's Addiction. It is congenial enough to make me want to stay immersed.

About her identity as a child of LA, she writes, "They write books about us. They make after-school specials about us. And none of us is the real us. None of it really captures who we are. But we eat it, digest it, and let it redefine us until we no longer know what is real and what is fake, and how clichéd is that?" The author views LA life as an imitation of the portrayal of LA life on the big screen. From that perspective, it's little wonder that she processed her youth by converting into a work of fiction. This novel is the third novel Darling has written, but the first commercially published. I look forward to seeing more from the nonfiction Nikki.

—Caitlin Xavier

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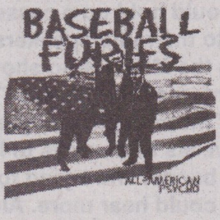

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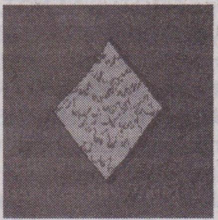

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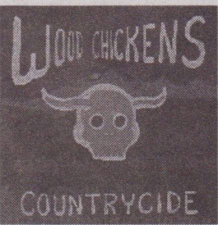

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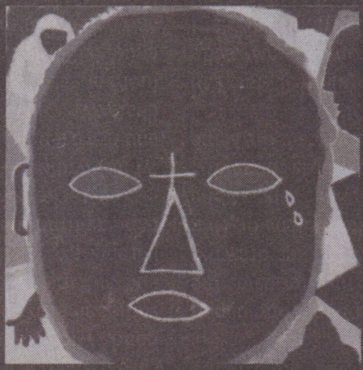

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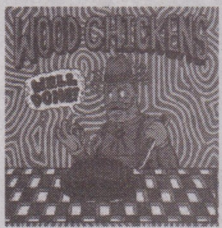

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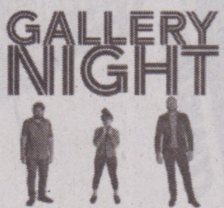

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AN ODE TO MRR

In 1984 I bought my first MRR at Kepler's Books in Stanford California, and my life was forever changed. Every month, I read of new bands (and sent away for their demos); I scoured the review section, learning about bands from across the world from the reviews of Tim, Martin, Walter G, et al., discovering bands that I still listen to today. I would hold up a cassette recorder to the radio speakers, recording the MRR Radio show to hear the new international bands "Tim and the gang" introduced, studying the tape for weeks afterwards to learn the names of bands, and trying to figure out how I could hear more. Along with BCT tapes, MRR taught me that there were small scenes throughout the world that shared the same politics and appreciation for angry fast thrash: for example, LARM and NEGAZIONE, MOB 47 and PROTES BENGT, RUIDO DE RABIA and HHH, BRAIN DEATH, SxOxB, and CHICKEN BOWELS, and closer to home, STIKKY, STARK RAVING MAD, STRAIGHT AHEAD... the list goes on. And much later, when Tim needed a reviewer who could stomach lo-fi thrash and grind, I jumped at the chance to be a "shitworker," if only, to pay back my debt to something that had given me, and all of us, so much.

More importantly, Tim held true to his politics and called out a lot of shady shit that supposed "punks" were doing, from shitty "business" practices, regressions into nationalism, or for sexual abuse. Along with Kent and Lisa at Ebullition, I can't think of anyone else who has shaped my politics and ethics more than Tim, and those that have kept those ethics alive. It's amazing that MRR lasted in print edition for as long as it did, which is a testament to the dedication and hardwork of the editors/shitworkers. So thank you, to Tim, Martin, and everyone who has been involved in MRR over the years for everything. The print edition may end, but the pissed off, righteous, punk spirit you gave life to lives on.

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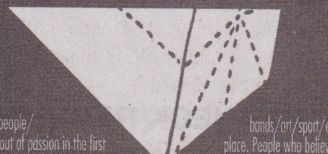

We like to meet people/bands/art/sport/etc. that do what they do out of passion in the first place. People who believe in a underground culture and are aware that most of the stuff that is sold nowadays under that flag is total crap only made to make money. And, if you feel you can write and relate, get in touch. To put it with Fugazi's words:

"NEVER MIND WHAT THEY'RE SELLING- IT'S WHAT YOU ARE BUYING"

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MOVIES

BRING ME THE HEAD OF GENE SISKEL

CAROLYN KEDDY

We are always looking for films to review. If you made one, send a copy to PO Box 3852, Oakland, CA 94609 USA. If your film is playing in the San Francisco Bay Area let us know at carolyn@ maximumrocknroll.com. We will go see it.

I have never been able to wrap my head around the idea of "influencers." It makes no sense to me. People tell me ridiculous facts like there is a kid who gets paid $500,000 a year to open toys on YouTube. Who would watch that? I can't imagine that it works, but there's something going on. Do people remember the Fyre Festival? I barely do, but there are two documentaries about what a colossal fuck up it was. That also seems ridiculous. So I started with **Fyre: The Greatest Party That Never Happened**.

The Fyre Festival was the creation of Billy McFarland and Ja Rule as a promotional event for the launching of their Fyre app, which was going to be a way for an average person to book an event with a famous person. Therefore it seems appropriate that the promotional festival would be billed as an exclusive event where you get to party with supermodels and hang out with major label bands like Blink 182 and Major Lazer. Plus it all takes place on an island in the Bahamas.

Fyre lays heavy on the details. The film was made with the help of the marketing companies that worked on promoting the festival. As a result there is a lot of behind the scenes footage. As McFarland notes later in **Fyre**, after being convicted of fraud, you should document everything. What I noticed most in the footage is that McFarland always had a drink in hand. That should have been a warning sign. Drunks have big plans. But they are not as good at doing the work needed to get it done. As a Bahamian bartender recalls of his first meeting with McFarland, "A drunk mind speaks a silver tongue."

Of course, it is easy to laugh at the idiots who paid thousands of dollars for a festival that never came together. **Fyre** avoids that trap by focusing more on the people who worked on the festival. There were a lot of people who tried to make it happen, trying to build the festival site, working out the logistics of putting on the festival, figuring out housing, and booking the bands. A few of them would be quickly replaced when they brought up concerns. The Bahamian workers got cheated out of their pay. The most heartbreaking is caterer Maryann Rolle who had to pay her staff out of her own savings after the Fyre people stiffed her.

On to **Fyre Fraud**, which has the distinction of featuring an interview with McFarland. They paid him for it, which seems like a poor choice though not surprising. Criminals always seem to get paid for telling their stories. In this case it may not have been a good idea. McFarland is elusive and weaselly. Can you really believe what he is telling you? At least **Fyre Fraud** realizes they can't by pointing out all the lies he has told them.

Fyre Fraud delves into McFarland's entrepreneurial history. McFarland's parents were real estate developers. He tells a weird story of selling crayons when he was in second grade which involves breaking into the school's computer. He claims "my first real company when I was in fifth grade was a web hosting company. I had three full time people working for me in India." He moves on to creating a cool looking credit card called Magnises. Then he starts on Fyre Media.

Fyre Fraud blames millenials for the Fyre Festival. It makes sense in some ways. The attendees were deceived by the slick marketing campaign. They had the money to waste on such frivolities. But I'd still have to go with the Fyre crew and the marketing team. Don't promise what you can't deliver.

The opposite of Billy McFarland and the Fyre Festival assholes is Bill Murray. The actor has a reputation for showing up at odd places and hanging out with regular people. I heard a story about Murray hailing a cab in Oakland, CA. When discovering the driver was a musician who was not able to practice enough due to his work schedule, Murray offered to drive while the driver played. There are all kinds of stories like this. **The Bill Murray Stories: Life Lessons Learned from a Mythical Man** compiles a bunch.

Director Tommy Abalone sets out to make a straightforward documentary about Bill Murray's social activities. He even tries to get an interview with Murray about it. But the thing about these Bill Murray stories is that they are unpredictable. They just seem to happen. Although Abalone tries to set it up like it is some urban legend, in most cases there is photographic or video evidence to back it up.

The stories are humorous, like the one I heard. It is mentioned in the film. There is a couple taking engagement photos. Murray happens by and takes some photos with them. He shows up at a house party. He plays some tambourine and his presence at the party is enough to stop the cops from shutting it down. He does the dishes at one party and jokes with guests at another.

Although there is not much substance to **The Bill Murray Stories: Life Lessons Learned from a Mythical Man** it is the perfect antidote to all the endless horrible stuff that is going on these days. If only all famous people were as cool as Bill Murray. Then again if they all were it might not seem as fun. (wastedapples.com/the-bill-murray-stories)

Laurel and Hardy were a comedy duo appearing in films together from 1921-1951. **Stan & Ollie** is the story of the pair doing live shows in Britain while trying to get a new film made. Their career has stalled due to Stan Laurel trying to leverage their popularity into a better contract while Oliver Hardy goes ahead and renews his contract at the lesser terms. The incident has driven a wedge between the two, but in the hopes making the new film the pair set off on their English tour.

The tour does not start off well. Few people come to the shows. Laurel and Hardy start doing promotional stunts and word of mouth starts to build. Unfortunately, with the return of popularity the old resentments reignite. Laurel and Hardy are joined by their wives Ida and Virginia later in the tour. As the wives of an onscreen couple, they also have a history together. The wives' relationship is played out in a complementary fashion to that of Laurel and Hardy.

Stan & Ollie begins as a pleasant tale of a deserved comeback. When the times are tough, it is easy to bond. The two are there for each other. Then the story turns more melancholy. The two are no longer youngsters. How long can they keep up these performances? Should they keep doing it? The film delves into the themes of aging, priorities, success, rivalry and friendship. Some worthwhile things the millenials might want to start thinking about. (stanandollie.co.uk)

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RECORDS

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(RH) Ryan Hertel
(DZ) Ryan Modee
(RL) Ray Lujan
(WN) Robert Collins

ABOLITIONIST – "A New Militance" 10"

At first, I kept thinking that I must be missing something here. I don't want to be making assumptions about the gender identities of the band members. This can't possibly be an entire eight-song concept record about feminism by a band of four dudes, with lyrics written in the first person from the perspective of a woman (*"Hands off our bodies / We're tired of the gaslighting"*). The cover art is an illustration of an army of women: featuring oversexualized, stereotypical representations of women of different ethnicities. Their faces are covered by pink bandanas, and they wave pink flags while marching away from a cityscape emitting clouds of pink smoke. Unsurprisingly, the illustrator is also a man. It's almost funny, like one of those "unclear on the concept" cartoon panels, how hard this misses the point. To the band: not all liberation movements belong to you. What feminism needs is for men to step back and let women define the struggle, define the goals, speak for themselves, and get to be the protagonist in *their own* story. You don't still get to be the cool guy in the band, you don't still get to tell the story. Support feminism by supporting women, not by exploiting women's struggle to promote yourself. And besides it not being your story to tell, you are not competent to tell this story from a woman's perspective. The pink theme is a little baffling (did I mention the vinyl is also light pink?), and the lyrics read like a *BuzzFeed* listicle of top feminism hashtags. It's shallow and reductive, with no signs of actual understanding of why these issues resonate so strongly with women's real lived experience. I commend the effort and intention that went into this, and am glad there are men that want to support feminist struggle. It's OK to have a long way to go, as long as you're willing to do the hard work of listening, learning, and growing. Why not write a record drawn from your own experience of how patriarchy has harmed you and people you care about? (HB)
(Different Kitchen / 1859)

ACTION BOYS – CD

Simple 1-2-1-2 punk structure with a gruff vocalist and a lot of metal influence in the guitar. The last song was some sort of stab at a punk ballad, and it was a real challenge to endure. (GH)
(self-released)

ANEURYSM – "Awareness" LP

Wow, someone's hangry. I read on the internet that ANEURYSM is a post-hardcore noise rock band from Boston. Indeed, that is what this sounds like. Very anthemic and upset, party rock for the post-hardcore set. This would probably sound better if I was on PCP. (GB)
(Tor Johnson)

APE RITES – "Dolci" LP

This Swiss band comes across as a straight-up pop punk band. The music is peppy and upbeat, and the singer has one of those high-pitched, slightly annoying sounding voices. Instead of some sappy, lovelorn lyrics, that voice sings tales of some twisted things. The song titles don't reveal too much, so you're caught by surprise by these offbeat words. Nice. (CK)
(Ape)

ARCTIC FLOWERS – "Straight to the Hunter" LP

In an era when most DIY bands can barely exist longer than a single album and tour, it's actually quite special to see a band like ARCTIC FLOWERS put out their third full-length album. More specifically, a self-released third full-length! After nearly a decade of existence, these Northwestern punks are still killing it! This album brings us more of the dark and catchy WIPERS-influenced punk rawk we've come to expect. As with the more recent recordings, some will almost find it jarring that the vocals are actually sung (as opposed to screamed, barked, or grunted) into the mic. Alex is an awesome singer and doesn't try to hide it, which sometimes doesn't blend well with raging punk. But with ARCTIC FLOWERS, it works perfectly. This album destroys! My one criticism is that the insert seems like a rushed afterthought. But when that's the worst part of your record, you're doing something right. Do yourself a favor and find this record. (FS)
(self-released)

BARE MINIMUM – "Where the Buses Don't Come" CD

Tough guy metallic hardcore from Toronto with kind of "humorous" lyrics at times. Aggressive singing that sounds like it was raised on a diet of alternative rock radio. (GH)
(self-released)

BEST BOYS ELECTRIC – "Brett Pop Affairs" 10"

Tank Girl-style caricatures of the band adorn this sugary coated steamer of a gatefold 10" EP. Songs about their hometown, girls, etc., and it's completely paint-by-numbers. By what they have written about themselves, I think that they think they sound like the RAMONES, and justify this cavity-creating creeper by claiming that they are in search of the perfect pop song. An honest high point that I didn't expect to enjoy in a million years were the tight, quirky synth parts that seem to come from out of nowhere and don't belong within five kilometers of this record. Low-energy, brainless pop. (DZ)
(Dub City Sound Design / Yellow Jacket)

BRICHEROS – "Making Our Way to the USA" LP

Three things are critical to enjoying this album: you must love (like *love*) *I Don't Want to Grow Up*, you must at least strongly enjoy *How to Make Enemies and Irritate People*, and you must be open minded to accepting new melodic pop punk bands into your life. These three Peruvians living in the US create pogo pop that's just and fun as it is standard, and the path of this record is well-worn by many RAMONES obsessed kids before them. But you can't deny this is a fun record. The songs are great, and if your heart still flutters at the mention of '90s Lookout!, you'll be dancing to this! (FS)
(self-released)

JACKSON REID BRIGGS & THE HEATERS – "It All Comes Down" LP

This is heavy. The intro track made me think of SONIC'S RENDEZVOUS BAND. Not surprisingly, they are from Australia. This is pure rock'n'roll. Apparently, they get glommed into the swamp rock/SCIENTISTS scene, but there are enough nods to BIRDMAN and the SAINTS (hello horn section) here, that seems like selling em short. Great record, hope they come to the USA! Guess I need to track down their first album now... (GB)
(Grubby Publications)

BROWER – "Buzzsaws" LP

Holy Glam, Batman! I never heard of this guy BROWER from Virginia, but he's definitely heard of T. REX and SWEET. Can't think of much shit that fits this sound outside the '70s…bedroom studio glam proto pub rock, maybe MICKEY JUPP'S LEGEND, but just the boogie rockers. Certainly not the first to mine this sound as of late, but the tunes speak for themselves, and this is an unexpected killer start to finish, like TANK for the 21st century. (GB) (DIG!)

BRUTAL BIRTHDAY – "Commotion" EP

Bombastic, over the top, simplistic, noisy punk from Italy that sounds like a wall being knocked over. Kinda sounds like they are taking cues from early JESUS LIZARD at times, but I bet they're not. Less cerebral and more grunting. Upon first listen, I didn't care for this, but upon repeated spins the riffs kept coming out of the mire. (GH)
(Total Punk)

BWAK DWAGON – "Underground And Passed Around" LP

Space-age sounds for punks who dig commercial rock radio but also love HAWKWIND. Ohio's BWAK DWAGON lose me on tracks like "The Underworld" and "Demeter" (unfortunately, these two run back to back) when they stay slow and subdued, but the weirdness dominates even on '80s alt radio/proto darkwave trax like "Evergreen." This band would have opened for SCREAMING TREES in 1987. (WN)
(self-released)

THE CARVELS NYC – "Life is Not a Waiting Room" EP

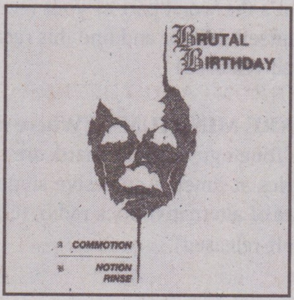
This is some saxophone-heavy power pop, with forceful vocals projected by rhythm guitarist Lynne Von Pang. "Life is Not a Waiting Room" and "I Fell in Love with a Dead Boy" both offer some party-pop moments that would feel right at home in a live set opening for the RUBINOOS or SOUTHERN CULTURE ON THE SKIDS. As a counterpoint, "Scarcity" felt a little like listening to this band at a prom try to force a slow dance on kids who just want to dance like dum-dums. I would expect they have a fully entertaining stage presence, and know how to show the audience the good times. Based on this three-song sample though, I would expect to skip a few slower tracks on a longer release. (RH)
(Tarbeach)

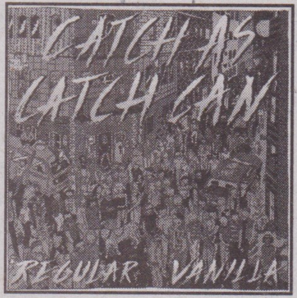
CATCH AS CATCH CAN – "Regular Vanilla" LP

As soon as this started, Burger Records odors took over all of my senses. I was shocked that this wasn't a new release from that label just due to the poppy, bubblegum garage vibrations being excreted by my speaker. Then I read that the cassette release will be coming out there, and all made sense in the world. This is four dudes from Germany who love them some garage pop saturated with ooooooohs, ahhhhhhs, and jingly-jangly guitars. "Age of Coming" is a good pick if you want to anticipate a live sing-along, and "Pickle-Brine Chicken" is a real danceable jam about the culinary arts. These dudes have not reinvented any wheels, but this record is seeping with love of the genre. (RH)
(Alien Snatch)

C'EST DOMMAGE – "Red Lobster, Modesto, CA/The C'mel"

An homage of sorts to early '90s post-emo rock, I think. In places, it reminds me a little of EVERGREEN. The guitars chime pleasingly over a slow-to-mid-paced rhythmic amble. The affected, whiny vocals may be a deal breaker for you on this one—for me, they fall on just the wrong side of annoying. (AM)
(Fullyintercoastal)





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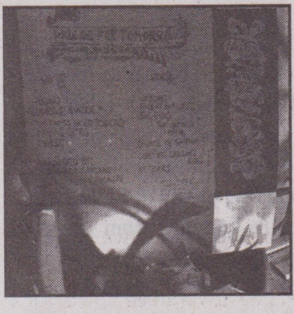
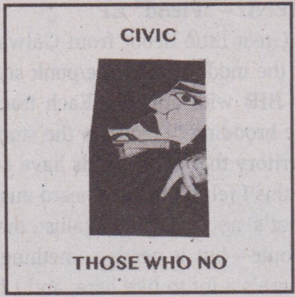




CHRONIC ANXIETY / DIALER – split LP

I reviewed DIALER's debut cassette a few months ago and loved it, so I was stoked to see this. DIALER continue to use aspects of post-punk, synth, free jazz (??), and more to create a tight feeling of what the future holds for punk. They sound so fucking pissed about the state of the world, but seem cautiously optimistic about the future. Start-stop spazzing makes space for clarinet freakouts and weirdo samples, and the singer still has FILTH vibes. I'm into it. CHRONIC ANXIETY are bass and drums playing post-punk with some grunge overtones. Their singer is kind of half singing, half ranting in an almost stream-of-consciousness way about yoga and big gulps. I'm not that into it. (GH)
(Bunny Cat / SRA)

CHRONOPHAGE – "Prolog for Tomorrow" LP

I'm horrifically late writing this review. I've been putting it off because I'm so afraid I won't be able to do justice to this brilliant, unique, compelling debut LP by Austin's CHRONOPHAGE, one of the best and most interesting bands in the world right now. This record sounds like everything I want when I see the tag "DIY" applied to a band: it's chaotic but confident, it's off-kilter but unbelievably catchy, and it sounds like it could have been made only by them. They'll probably get a lot of comparisons to the *Messthetics* compilations, and that's fair (although I think the *Homework* series would be more apt, since CHRONOPHAGE sounds unmistakably American to my ears), but it's also frustrating. CHRONOPHAGE doesn't sound like the past; they sound like the future. Or at least they sound like the future that I want to live in. *Prolog for Tomorrow* gets my strongest possible recommendation. (MF)
(Cleta Patra)

CIVIC – "Those Who No" EP

Although I kinda enjoyed my first listen of this EP, now that I've heard this four or five times, I've decided that this shimmery little piece of wax needs a better, brighter light shined down on it. Sure it's catchy as fuck, and that is most likely why I didn't immediately pay it the attention it requires. But it's also plenty fucking dark, which pairs quite well with poppy shit in my opinion. Like if the BOUNCING SOULS really were touched, troubled and tortured, sweet, complicated punks, instead of whatever the hell they turned out to be. A killer, unexpected BRIAN ENO cover rounds it out, and this is definitely going to be played for visitors this month. Not intentionally, though. I just don't plan on it leaving the turntable for a while. (DZ)
(Famous Glass)

RICHIE DAGGER – "Forming / Media Blitz" 8"

Weird little lathe cut record from someone who purports that this is CHRISTIAN DEATH covering the GERMS. It's not—nobody would hear the stomp and the noise on both tracks and associate them with the atmospheric gloom of early CHRISTIAN DEATH. The cover of "Forming" on here is solid, but unfortunately it cuts off early to include a nearly incomprehensible live take on "Media Blitz" that doesn't seem related to the original song at all. A puzzling and inessential record. The zine that comes with this document is printed on glossy paper and has some pretty nice collages and drawings showing the creator's love of both CHRISTIAN DEATH and the GERMS. Worth it for the zine, but even that is a brief read. (JD)
(self-released)

DAN KATZMAN'S DEGREASER – "Quarter Life Crisis" CD

Glam and butt-metal influenced "funny" punk from Florida. It's obvious that a lot of time and effort went into this, evidenced by the intricate guitar shredding throughout the CD, but the goofy lyrics, party dude vibe, and multiple references to Instagram kinda kill it for me. (GH)
(Bufu)

DEAD FRIENDS 46 – "Hardcore" LP

This eleven-song debut LP from this hardcore band of OC veterans maybe has its DNA somewhere near *Brats in Battalion*, but punches for more straightforward DETONATORS-style rollicking retconned '80s hardcore than guitar driven melody. The weight balance between everything that needs to come out in lyrical expression and spontaneous hardcore energy often gets tricky in the old school equation, but DEAD FRIENDS 46 are to be admired for their commitment to honoring fallen friends, a drug and alcohol free advocacy without judgment, and keeping things positive, though reading of the names of the dead friends of theirs at the end of the record is probably the most heavy and sobering thing I've heard on a hardcore record in some time. The covers of PETER AND THE TEST TUBE BABIES ("Banned from the Pubs") and SOCIAL DISTORTION ("Mass Hysteria"), while interpretive, keep things fun as the tried-and-true sturdy gravel throated hardcore otherwise mines dark places. (KS)
(Rank and File)

DEPOSIT MAN – "Frustrate" CD

This Finland-based quartet is comprised of older chaps (30-something dads, they proclaim): among them there's a couple of Finns, a Catalan, and a Samoan who does the singing/songwriting. Musically, at their best, they are very reminiscent of that slower melodic '82 sound, like UK SUBS crossed with a driving UK DECAY. Or ARTICLES OF FAITH on 33 instead of 45. I guess there's a fair amount to be said for maturity (and fatherhood?) on the back of this one? (RK)
(Fast Decade)

DERRUMBANDO DEFENSAS – "Ruidos De Resistencia" LP

Vinyl version of 2017's *Confrontar* CD, retitled and repackaged for the 12" format. Monstrous metallic hardcore with a production and presentation well suited for massive stages and furious sing alongs, breathing life and urgency into a subgenre often reserved for third-tier bro bands. *Ruidos de Resistencia* reminds me why I still have a soft spot for the heat chugs and for those melodic guitar leads, and they make

everything feel important…because everything *is*. The only mistake here is the lack of a lyrics sheet, or even context for the words—because the words are important, especially the perspective of women in a hardcore band from Chile addressing institutional oppression and exploitation. "Cruelty Free" is the track to end all tracks, and the "*every moment / every second*" chorus will likely be stuck in my head for weeks. Quality fucking release from start to finish, full endorsement. (WN)
(Derrumbando Defensas / R&A Schallplatten)

DEVIANT – "Loading The Gun" EP

Sharp, focused, distorted modern hardcore. Overbearing buzzsaw guitars, lightning fast with a sick snarl. Think about the SKEMÄTA school of attack, but way less nuanced. Ferocity in six movements. (WN)
(11 PM)

DUMB VISION – "Modern Things" LP

I remember DUMB VISION being poppier the last time I heard them, and those poppy elements are still there, but the band also seems darker and more focused. DUMB VISION is coming from a garage punk background, and layers that with the slightest bit of psych, and they do an awesome job of building their songs into a frenzy. My favorite example of that is the closer, "Don't Die," which builds on a riff and is fairly repetitive, but is able to build tension and acts as a perfect ending for the LP. The whole thing is a rager from start to finish. (GH)
(Big Neck)

EIN ZWEI DIE / SHAKING HEADS – split EP

Split record by two Swedish punk bands. This is EIN ZWEI DIE's (as far as I can tell) only release to date, but it was recorded in 2011, so they're not exactly a "new" band. Probably a cool story as to why these two songs are finally gracing our ears some eight years later. No insert, no internet, only mystery. They're cool: like if GORILLA ANGREB was trying to do FILTH covers. SHAKING HEADS are actually a new band, and five dollars says at least one of the members has a DEAD MOON tattoo. They're dark, simplistic, anthemic, and gritty. True punk. I feel like I've listened to this record a hundred different times in a hundred different punk basements, but it still puts a smile on my face. (FS)
(Flyktsoda)

ENDORPHINS LOST – "Seclusions" LP

This one is a straight-up grindcore ripper. While this Seattle band has some metallic tendencies, there is defiantly a heavy west coast powerviolence thing going on here. Not only that, they throw in just enough smoldering sludge riffage to keep us from burning out on the blistering blast inferno. Like TERRORIZER peppered with moments of CROSSED OUT and BRAINOIL. Sure they have a familiar sound, but this shit is well-crafted and solid as fuck! Check it out! (BA)
(From the Head of Zeus)

FIEND – "Fiend" EP

Great little debut from Galway, Ireland's FIEND. These folks pull of the modern hardcore/punk style as exemplified by bands like RUT or BIB with aplomb. Each track is different from each other, from the brooding "Fiend" to the stomper "Scum," but all of them explore territory that other bands have covered before. Indeed while listening to this I felt like I have heard this riffs and ideas plenty of times before. That's not a knock against them—they're copying from the right people—but it needs something to help it stand out from the pack. There's a lot to like here, and I have high hopes for their next record. (JD)
(Donor)

THE FLYTRAPS – "Kitten With a Whip/Nice Boys"

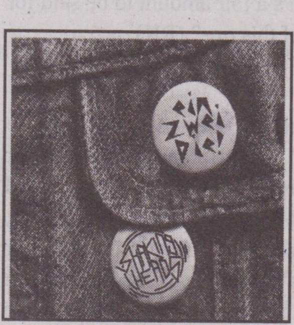
A hard rock/punk hybrid from Southern CA, complete with punky porno sleeve. "Kitten With A Whip" sorta recalls LOUDMOUTHS in terms of theme and yowl, though there's a studio schmaltz that doesn't sit quite right with me. Ditto for their flipside take on the ROSE TATTOO classic. A total time warp sort of affair...It's as if Junk Records has risen from the dead or something. (MC)
(Outro)

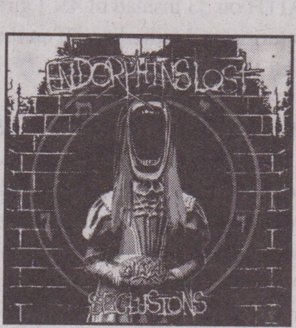
FOOTBALL / WHITE SAVAGE – split LP

A double dose of ol' Jimmy Hollywood, noted heavy from classic bands like the TYRADES and BASEBALL FURIES, most recently of GALLERY NIGHT. WHITE SAVAGE and FOOTBALL both land somewhere in the middle of all this, though the quality of each is uniformly quite high. While the bands have their own distinctions—FOOTBALL prefers direct thud, WHITE SAVAGE is more spastic and exploratory—there's this simplistic and hard-charging drive that runs through all of Hollywood's material: a primal and powerful use of punk energy that's always been highly impressive to these ears. It can be heard throughout this split (which functions far better than it has any real right to!): artful and manic in equal measure, always careening, always inspiring. Great stuff. (MC)
(Big Neck)

FORNIS – "Endless Night" CD

I know that when I die and go straight to hell, I'll be forever getting my ass thoroughly beaten by all the bands I've slagged, all the while being reminded of my own terrible recorded output, and thousands of other embarrassments I have created. I get it, I will totally deserve it. That being said, this CD is completely undefinable—'50s doo wop sludge but also kinda cutesy. I have no idea whatsoever what these goofballs are going for. So incredibly odd, yet completely forgettable. (DZ)
(self-released)





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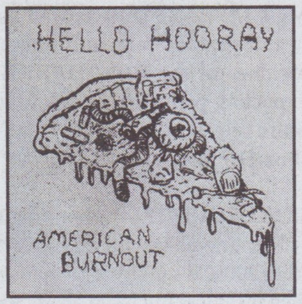
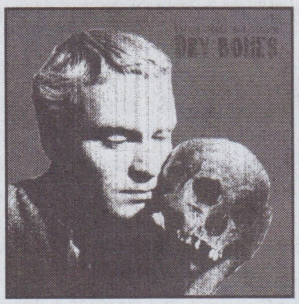




GIGLINGER – "Money, Power, and Corruption" 10"

This is a release of two three-song EPs from this long-standing Finnish smart punk outfit. They got the licks, but they got the lyrics too. Just dirty grungy anthemic punk rock with an anarcho-political bent, sounds like the '80s all over again. (GB)
(self-released)

GHETTO BLASTERS – "Hot Rocks/Too Loose"

Classic '77 NYC punk with gratuitous tinges of glam (I'm talking licks for days, y'all). The titles should tell you all you need to know here, and GHETTO BLASTERS deliver as advertised. (WN)
(Spazz)

GLOBSTERS – "Express Everything" LP

This is it—the punkest thing in the magazine this month. Lo-fi, fucked up punk from Hazard, Kentucky, with every single note played full tilt and in the red. Every self-loathing, society-hating, paranoid word of this LP is screamed to the point of brain breaking insanity. At times, they *almost* share some similarities with crasher crusters trying to reimagine DISCHARGE for 2019, but GLOBSTERS is the sound of pure, unadulterated, unrefined hatred. A cassette version of this came out in 2014 (I've never heard it), but apparently this is a different mix and arrangement than the original. What are you waiting for? GLOBSTERS is the wildest flower. (GH)
(SPHC)

HEAVY METAL – "Too OZ 4 I.T." EP

After three LPs of rambunctious and oddball punk jingles, this Berliner/Australian combo gets the lightweight, red-stamped Total Punk sleeve treatment, and it suits them well. "Underground Agent," "Overtime," and "Schweinebastard" sound like a nine-year-old having a temper tantrum in the middle of older brother's band practice. "Gasmask Factory II" uses electronic drums for a truly groove-worthy experience. While I've enjoyed their previous shitty-good music, I think this smaller dose works better. Those already acquainted with HEAVY METAL will not likely change their opinion either way. (MA)
(Total Punk)

HELLO HOORAY – "American Burnout/Cherries Light the Way"

Boy, if you're put off by the trash pizza cover art, I don't blame ya. It's fuckin' rough. Luckily, the music on it is much better than the visual aesthetic would suggest. The '70s STONES-style riffing makes this one very easy to enjoy, but the dude's vocal style put it over the top for me. It's so laid back and matter of fact that it becomes almost comical. It's a strange choice that I'm really enjoying. The overall effect, especially on the superior A-side, kinda reminds me of a way (*way*) less jammy SPACIN' or something of that ilk. Look, I know this one's a hard sell, but I really think it's worth your while to try to put the cover art aside and give it a fair shot. It's definitely a keeper to my ears. (MF)
(self-released)

ANDY HUMAN AND THE REPTOIDS – "Psychic Sidekick" LP

A long time comin' for the REPTOIDS' round two. *Psychic Sidekick* serves as a not-so-subtle reminder that Andy Human & Co. remain one of the top tier outfits around these days, presenting a bent variant that's more critical, absurdist, and exciting than most of the contemporary class. Theirs is an out-of-time sound, recalling hyper-specific influences (why oh why do I continually think about the punkest moments from the OFFS or ALIEN CITY when hearing this band?) but arranged with a personality and perspective that's unique and just plain interesting. So many killers. "You Like Your Job" is a huge wind-up, poking a safety pin in illusions via a sick guitar schmearing, "Thrust of History" is gutter glam from Galaxy Z, "Fissures" and "Echo Pedal" both take a bird's eye outsider view while still buzzing mightily, on and on, and no duff cuts. As much as I've enjoyed the singles they've slotted in between their albums to date, the long-form release is where the REPTOIDS truly excel—I'll be spinning this endlessly for the foreseeable future. A vital act from the here and now, so do yourself a favor and take their trip. (MC)
(Total Punk)

THEE IRMA & LOUISE – "Dry Bones" LP

This record has such an '80s feel. Back then, we'd simply call it college rock. It's got a quirky musical style that is herky-jerky, filled with odd chords and time signatures, and there are elements of surf rock and post-punk. The singer has a serious but goofy vocal style, and the lyrics are thinkers such as "What Did The Deep Sea Say?" THEE IRMA & LOUISE probably would have been big in the '80s. The insert states "This record is the companion piece to an experimental movie that you are free to shoot." Hey, why not give it a shot? It's on pretty, swirly lime sherbet vinyl, too. (CK)
(Sugar Land)

IRON BARS – LP

These St. Louis vets have crafted quite a ripping debut, with a gnarly '80s USHC vibe and more than a touch of early punk's crash-and-burn recklessness. CHRONIC SICK, RKL and NIHILISTICS are clear touchstones, but there's a swagger and wildness in the mix here that's very DEAD BOYS as well. The clear, venomous vocals are immediately distinctive, as are the wild, nearly over the top guitar leads and solos. The tempo is generally moderate, though the songwriting is so hectic that many songs feel faster than they actually are, and there are some slow burners thrown in as well. This doesn't have the intentionally retro feel of the early '00s USHC revival bands—it's well-written hardcore that shares a timeless quality with bands from an earlier era. (AU)
(SPHC)

IRON CHIC / TOYS THAT KILL – split LP

I'd be lying if I said that TOYS THAT KILL didn't have, and rely on, a dependable, bafflingly sturdy, formulaic style. Todd's trademarked caterwaul, on top of his manic, monkey-mantra music, all with the same tempo and perfectly planned breaks, sandwiched between Sean's

more adult and smart songwriter-ish punk, gets a slight little twist with every release, and their shit somehow seems to never get stale. I don't get it. It defies physics, and this little five-banger has left me wanting more, just like everything else they've done for the last dozen or so years. It's still absolutely fucking killer. IRON CHIC, on the other hand, got lost on me. It's pretty melodic, bearded and tight black t-shirt-clad (I assume), delicately growled type stuff. My appreciation for dude rock is light handed at best, and while you do get a few good whiffs of the ARRIVALS and that GRABASS CHARLESTONS/DALE AND THE CAREENERS LP—which are absolutely stellar examples of the genre, mostly—it just sounded like the rest of the stuff that makes up the majority of this sweet-yet-gruff bro's handle on the style. (DZ)
(Dead Broke / Recess)

IRON GUTS KELLY – "Burnt" EP
Lawrence, Kansas' IRON GUTS KELLY take their name from a more ridiculous episode of *M*A*S*H*, set during the '50s Korean War, where a general dies in the embrace of one of the camp's nurses, and his death is then reconstructed to appear as being in the heat of battle. The band's outlook seems rooted in the same sort of dark irony: the EP's cover features a drawing of a punked-out ubiquitous Kansas sunflower flipping the bird, but the humor ends there, with four tracks of meat and potatoes angry hardcore that falls somewhere between the rock edge of STRYCHNINE and the blunt force of SLAPSHOT. This decade-and-a-half-old band's earliest recordings had the feel of early, simplistic DR. KNOW, with sustained vowels and simple thrashings, but the singer growls a bit harder here, as the playing is more confident and ambitious within its economy. No lyric sheet, but the vocals are clear enough, and "Goodfellas" is a standout track with its chorus-driven affirmation of punk community and camaraderie, rung in with a "Salad Days"-style bell intro. Slightly better production would've shined that one up even further. (KS)
(Violent Pacification)

LADY HUMP – "Drug Knife" CD
Nasty punk rock'n'roll ready made for the California adult punk set. NASHVILLE PUSSY meets the STOOGES and/or MEATMEN for a new generation. (WN)
(Water Under The Bridge)

LAURICE – "Bad Boy" LP
Yes, everybody's favorite bad boy is back in the saddle again, finally taking the giant leap from '70s glam into '80s new romantic. It's hard to tell whether he had a BILLY IDOL fetish, or someone (ahem) steered him in this direction, but whatever the case, these tunes are sure to light up pretty much any futuristic TV studio dancefloor you can find. How can you deny hot licks and a drum machine? Very good stuff. (GB)
(Mighty Mouth Music)

LENNY LASHLEY'S GANG OF ONE – "All Are Welcome" LP
This isn't all that unique sounding as far as singer songwriter stuff goes outside of punk. This has moments of alt-country, folk, and guitar heavy indie rock. The rock stuff reminds me of BOB MOULD's solo stuff as well as his '90s band SUGAR, with a bit of twang, and the folk stuff reminds me of the WATERBOYS. Being a member of the NEW DARKBUSTER and STREET DOGS, I was expecting predictable punk folk, but this turned out more interesting. Solid release. (RL)
(Pirates Press)

LOST SOUNDS – "Memphis Is Dead" LP
Remastered reissue of LOST SOUNDS' game-changer debut album from 2001. It's pretty hard to overstate the impact they had on my taste—they just blew my brain apart. Having already thoroughly flipped for the REATARDS, LOST SOUNDS took that completely raw, blood-dripping punk sound and augmented it with synths to craft something far darker and often more dangerous than the teenage tantrum punk that was expected. This was entirely more musical, moodier, strange, and a lot more deviant. At this early stage, they had yet to submerge themselves in their march toward *Black Wave*, and you can still detect (gasp!) garage roots in their attack. See especially "Inside My Head" and their great reworking of the LOLLIPOP SHOPPE's "You Must Be A Witch" for the proof. And it simply must be stated: the presence and power of ALICJA TROUT here can't be ignored. Her songs here are totally revelatory—take a listen to "Memphis 99" or "Satan Bought Me," and bow down—truly one of the most dynamic and underrated ladies in all of punk. LOST SOUNDS didn't make many false moves in their lifespan, but the beginning is a mighty fine place to start. If you haven't heard this already, what the fuck could you possibly be waiting for? (MC)
(Big Neck)

MAÑANA COUCH – "Brooklyn Dirt" LP
This Brooklyn band plays a rollicking blend of party punk and rock'n'roll. Metallic riffs and playing bolster the sound, which is a combination of early VAN HALEN, NEW YORK DOLLS, and would you believe POISON IDEA? I honestly enjoyed this a lot more than I thought I would, based on the terrible cover art and inscrutable name. From the looks of the photos, these are not young guys, and they've been around the block. But they know what they're doing, and have managed to churn out a great '80s punk/metal LP in 2019. (AM)
(Idle Edsel)

MOD HIPPIE – "Wannabe Nobody" CD
On first listen, it sounds like some 50-year-olds sat around listening to the BAY CITY ROLLERS, REDD KROSS, and NICK LOWE. There's not much punk here at all, if any. It is, however, well-crafted, old dude mellowed bubblegum—too light on the rock, and a little too heavy on personal songwriting prowess and skill to be appreciated by the *MRR* elite, though there are more songs on which I've hit the repeat button than stinkers that I have skipped. I know you don't really wanna listen to it, but what if I told you DJ BONEBREAK played drums? Don't you wanna maybe try it out just for shits and giggles, now? Yes. Yes, you do. Plus, maybe your parents will hear you listening to this and get off your case for one fucking minute. (DZ)
(Karma Frog)

MOLAR – "Straniero" 12"

Upbeat post-punk with strong pop undertones, but still aggressive enough to sound unmistakably punk. The songs are melodic and pretty, but also unsettling. These two different tendencies pull in competing directions, creating a natural tension. Just when you think the song has settled into a poppy riff, it gets weird again, throwing in layers of dissonant chords, unexpected accents, and yelling. Their 2016 release includes a cover of a SLANT 6 song, and the influence is still a relevant point of reference on this release. This record has five tracks, definitely looking forward to more. (HB)
(Everything Sucks)

MORE STUPID INITIALS – "9 Out of 10 Doctors Recommend More Stupid Initials" LP

Who do we have to blame for the mass proliferation of three-initial hardcore bands in the '80s? SSD? DOA? CCR? *MRR*? In any event, MSI most likely predates ATI (ANY THREE INITIALS) as the first to satirize the trend. Existing from 1986 until 1990, this band of Toronto-area youths churned out some decent meat 'n' potatoes hardcore, and *9 Out of 10 Doctors* compiles the complete 1986 and 1988 studio sessions from which their two proper EPs were selected. It should be obvious even before listening that MSI laced their musical output with a healthy dose of tongue-in-cheek humor. Sure enough, the LP opens with a track called "Generic Straightedge Song," and features covers of "Sugar Sugar" and a song from a Rankin/Bass animated TV series. However, unlike full-on joke bands like CRUCIAL YOUTH or GRUDGE, MSI were more likely just goofy teenagers. I'd imagine this lovingly assembled archival release, complete with a big booklet, would please fans of reissues by the likes of NEGATIVE ELEMENT or YOUNG REPUBLICANS. If you want something that dials the intensity up a bit higher, check out Schizophrenic's expanded reissue of the SONS OF ISHMAEL *Hayseed Hardcore* EP (that band shared a member with MSI and really ripped). (CS)
(Schizophrenic)

NATTERERS – "Head In Threatening Attitude" CD

This is hard-hitting, tight punk with a horror-style surf guitar, not unlike DEAD KENNEDYS and even a pinch of AGENT ORANGE, with the vocals a stone's throw from a better-honed Kirsten of NAKED AGGRESSION. It seems a little too well-produced for something that's trying to sound raw, but some people go for that shit. This is undeniably tight, well-oiled, and spastic, even if it's a few decades too late. (DZ)
(Boss Tuneage)

NIXON NOW – "The NOW Sound" CD

You like testosterone rock? Well, eat this shit up. Complete MC5 worship that totally falls flat. At least it's not more pop punk in my pile, but it's completely rehashed rock garbage, and the drummer doesn't even have the decency to change his last name from "Rath" to "Wrath." (DZ)
(Elektrohasch)

NO BLUES – "Exploding Hearts/Miranda Rights"

Damaged and distorted power pop for no generation at all, and for every member of every generation ever. It's simple, it's raw, and the guitars are dominant and come at you from every direction. Two tracks. 100% punk gold. (WN)
(SPHC)

NONCOMPLIANTS – "Fed Up" CD

This New York trio plays angry bar punk. Sort of like that glut of SOCIAL DISTORTION and early ANGRY SAMOANS-influenced bands of the early '90s. These guys are pretty negative and without much humor in the mix. Music for "fuck everybody" punks who wake up pissed off and ready to fight. (RL)
(Cacophone)

NOT ALL THERE – "Holy Crap! It's Not All There" CD

This is an excellent BAD RELIGION-esque disc of short, sweet, melodic hardcore. Twin guitars, layered vocals (though definitely more *Suffer* than *Recipe For Hate*). I really dig this. (RK)
(Snatchee)

NOTHINGTON / SWINGIN' UTTERS – split EP

A worthy song each from two SF bay area veterans. NOTHINGTON's track is reminiscent of late '80s big guitar alternative punk, where the roots might go down to STIFF LITTLE FINGERS but the aspect and melody hits more in the direction of Chad Price-era ALL. It's a bittersweet, but sweet, catchy anthem track for the band to go out on. The SWINGIN' UTTERS track was a surprise: drilling mid-tempo melody somewhere between the expected jangle of '70s UK punk-pub originators, but cut with a more avant edge similar to a great EFFIGIES track, with lyrics dropping with clever missives. Lime green vinyl makes it a keeper. (KS)
(Red Scare)

NOWON – "Pop Destroyed Pop" CD

High energy Japanese pop punk-ish alternative rock. It's slick and well-played, but too by the books. (CK)
(Hardcore Kitchen!)

OLDFASHIONED IDEAS – "Still Worth Fighting For" CD

Swedish streetpunk here. Although the vocals here are gruff, this has a tuneful feel that borders on NEWTOWN NEUROTICS and the UK SUBS at times. Luckily the songs are not about raising a beer with the boys. Although this got a bit redundant by the end, I do give it a thumbs up. (RL)
(Contra)

ONLY THE LONELY – "Dimming Lights" EP

The band name pegs the band perfectly. Snappy punk tracks with one leg hopelessly caught in an American rock'n'roll bear trap. DESTROY ALL MONSTERS, ROY ORBISON, AVENGERS—you know, the classics—

reinvented and re-envisioned and damn near reincarnated with screaming Swedish space leads and a vocal warble straight out of '77 LA. If this was KBD, I'd be humping legs to get a piece of them bonzers. Bonus points for gluing each song title individually on the back cover. (WN)
(Rundgång)

OVERBITE – "Awake" EP

Fuck, this is gnarly. Blown-out and feeding back all over the place, Ireland's OVERBITE offer up five tracks of fucked up disorientating hardcore with bestial vocals and some nasty riffs buried under the fuzz. The shitty looking pixelated packaging was initially off-putting, but after hearing the record, it makes perfect sense—one more element of this band's presentation that is designed to confuse and obscure. The muffled, claustrophobic recording (which would be awful for almost any other band) is actually a plus, highlighting the ear-damaging shrieks and squalls of feedback while the drums and bass struggle in the background. This is a very challenging, very interesting record that I hope will find its way to those who would enjoy it most. Fans of PIG HEART TRANSPLANT and the like to the front, please! (AU)
(Reagent)

PHYSIQUE – "The Evolution of Combat" LP

Holy shit! Olympia's PHYSIQUE does it again, this time in a style more strongly influenced by DISCLOSE than before. Unlike their demo or their first LP, *Punk Life Is Shit*, every track feels more streamlined, including their eponymous track, which was previously featured on their demo. There's no escape from the raw cacophony, almost no lulls at all during the entire album. The songs themselves are deceptively simple, but upon further listening reveal tons of small changes and variations throughout. It's this attention to songwriting (and not just their status as an all-AMAB trans band) that separates them from the herd of fuckers that worship Kawakami. The lyrics are great, and live up to the title by describing the various ways that warfare, discrimination, and police brutality (among others) are changing in order to remain an ever-present threat to daily life. A dark, yet essential record. (JD)
(Distort Reality)

PISSCHARGE – "Eden" LP

FUCK YEAH!!! Get past the band name and doom metal-looking LP cover. There are so many reasons this Hanover band's (made up of Brazilian, Chilean, and German band members) debut LP is awesome! First, this sounds so fucking urgent, not in a "we liked and wanted to sound like urgent hardcore from the '80s" but actually *like* urgent hardcore from the '80s, where the emotion, politics and passion of what the band is trying to express fuel the intensity. Second, it doesn't *sound* like hardcore from the '80s, nor is there any particular direct reference point except maybe the experimentation and intensity of later '90s and '00s Brazilian hardcore (this is way more aggressive but let's say… MERDA?), where anything: melody, metal riffage, or simple boot-stomping punk can throw itself in to twist around the fourteen tracks of hardcore steamrolling. Third, it has absolutely wickedly scathing female vocals. Fourth, it is dedicated to the memory of Brazilian feminist and anti-police violence activist Marielle Franco, who was assassinated in 2018 in Rio de Janeiro. *"Never forget / Organize without fear!"* Fifth, the balance of chaotic looseness and musical competency is perfect, where sandpapery blasts of simple metal riffing charge simple and loose, but there's still deft thrash. Sixth, songs are sung in English, Portuguese, and Spanish, with a fold out lyric sheet containing translations. Seventh, the punchy recording is mastered well, but also balanced with sounding really raw. Eighth: Q: And D-beat? A: And D-beat. Ninth, the band is self described as "Antifa punk, no grayzone." I'm sold! (KS)
(Abackdistribution / Black Mosquito / Bomball / Boumxcoeur / Campary / Deviance / Dunkel Ziffer / Human Parasit / Missing The Point / Plank System / Redlightz)

PLAN NINE – "In Sympathy with Poland" EP

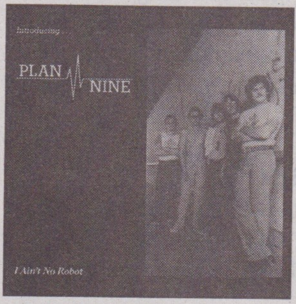
Kinda all-over-the-place reissue of this '81 release out of Calgary. It's akin to a lot of stuff from smaller scenes of that era in the sense that while the songs pretty much fall under the banner of punk, they touch on a lot of different styles. The goofier side of the GIZMOS might be a fair comparison, albeit with a bunch of hard rock guitar solos thrown in. I found it all pretty enjoyable, but then read the included booklet and found out the title song here is about how the brothers in this band felt that socialism and communism are bad for people, which, uh, dampened my enthusiasm. (MF)
(Supreme Echo)

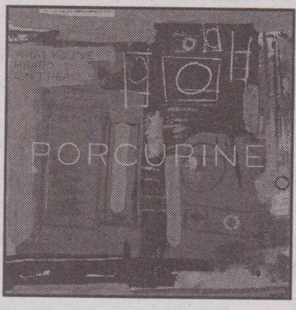
PORCUPINE – "What You've Heard Isn't Real" 12"

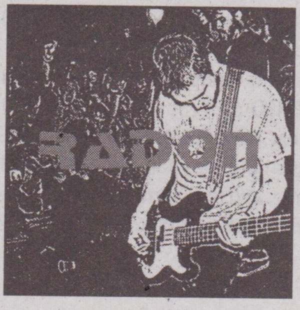
PORCUPINE have been kicking around the upper Midwest since 2006, and now feature one Greg Norton. Yes, he of the handlebar mustache. This six-song EP is straightforward, mid-tempo alternative rock, with a bit of that '90s Brit-pop feel. The opening track has a nice, catchy chorus, and overall it's pleasant enough, while not being particularly memorable. They do throw in one HÜSKER DÜ cover ("Standing by the Sea"), perhaps as a tribute to the late, great Grant Hart. (MD)
(DC-Jam / Dead Broke)

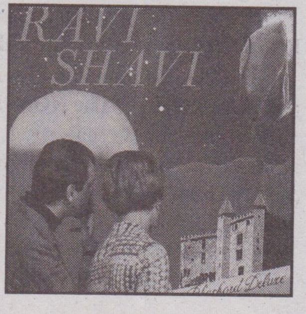
PRIVATE SCHOOL – "Lost in Action" EP + flexi

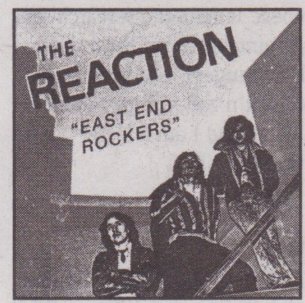
Deluxe-as-fuck reissue of a crucial Canadian punk slice. This four-song EP was originally released in '79 in a hard-to-file large envelope sleeve, and is now available in standard but expansive packaging, including an extra track, a booklet and two-song bonus flexi. The best tracks are still "Money Guns & Power" and the *Bloodstains* comped, proto-hardcore "Fuck You," but the rest of the songs are great too, sax and all! Supreme Echo rules! (MA)
(Supreme Echo)

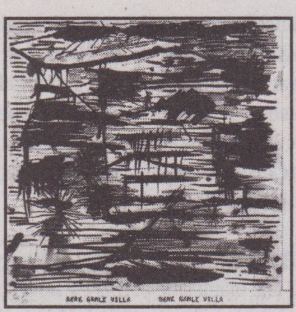


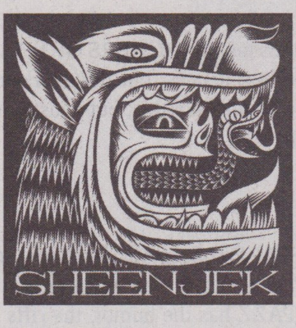


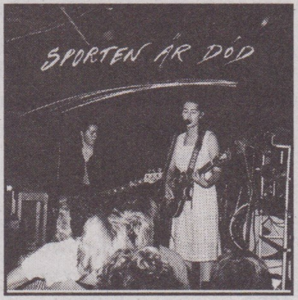












RADICAL FUN TIME – "There Is Only One Race the Human Race" EP

I'm not ashamed to admit that I, in fact, did more or less have a fun time on my first encounter with this environmentalist/human rights themed band. Through the art and message, they emit a "punx as hippies living in the woods" vibe, which is sort of corroborated by their bio on the internet. Song titles like "What is the Correct Way To Live? What is the Best Way of Life?," "Chemtrails—Aluminum Barium Dust A Synthetic DNA In a Toxic Aerial Spray," and "What is the Current Administration Covering Up?" all read like potentially quasi-wingnut headlines from various lefty or conspiracy theorist publications. Their sound is demented and fuzzy and cacophonous and so screamy (in a good way). Go back in time and put 'em on a bill with FLEAS AND LICE, CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE, and CHOKING VICTIM, and RADICAL FUN TIME would surely be the spectacle of the night. (MA)
(Dilapidated / Fields Without Fences / Radical Fun)

RADON – "More of Their Lies" LP

RADON is one of those beloved bands that was never very prolific, never quite went away, yet pops up every now and then to play a show and release some music. They were, at least in part, the foundation of the Gainesville scene, which eventually led to bands like HOT WATER MUSIC and AGAINST ME! This is their second LP since reuniting in 2005, and they haven't lost a step. So many such bands settle into adult contemporary alternative rock. Not Radon, no siree. It may be a little more polished than the classic *28* LP (released over 20 years ago), but it's still got lots of energy and will have you tapping your toes. Ripping pop punk from beginning to end. (MD)
(Creep / Dead Broke)

RAT PATROL – "Doing Just Fine" CD

RAT PATROL is from the Netherlands and have been around since 1988, but this is my first time listening to them. Retaining this amount of anger and drive after 30 years while still sounding fresh and relevant is not an easy task. They have a bit of an '80s USHC energy with biting, crunchy guitars and a vocalist who only has one setting: full-on rage. The politics are on point, and the songs have enough catchiness to stay in your head. (GH)
(Highly Obscure)

RAVI SHAVI – "Blackout Deluxe" LP

Third album from this Providence garage pop band. The music is jangly and upbeat, the songs are catchy and bright, and the vocals remind me of BBQ or KING KHAN: kind of crooning, with moments of vulnerability and desperation. It's their best record yet. (CK)
(Almost Ready)

THE REACTION – "East End Rockers" EP

First-gen punk from up Canada way, reissued in scholarly style. Though I've held the particular volume of *Smash the State* that included the REACTION for eons now, the presence of SIGGY MAGIC simply lifted the thunder out from under this lot for my ear-holes. Not the case today though—this sounds pretty primo, collecting their most coveted track "The Kid's Arrived," along with a few cassette-only movers/shakers. Not a lot of fat to trim either: proficient punking that's oddly comparable to the NORMALS, if forced to cite a domestic KBD heavy. Includes hyper-detailed booklet for all us nerds to wipe our brows with after pogo-ing. Good stuff! (MC)
(Supreme Echo)

REVEREND BEAT-MAN AND IZOBEL GARCIA – "Baile Bruja Muerto" CD

IZOBEL GARCIA is such a nice collaborator for REVEREND BEAT-MAN. His vocal style is rough and gritty, and hers is sassy, tough, and feminine. They sound perfect together. The music is stripped down. It is simply guitar and drums with an occasional bit of organ. It's primitive garage rock with a snarling attitude. Unfortunately, Garcia doesn't sing on every song. She should. Especially on the cover of "Love Me Two Times." That one needed her. (CK)
(Voodoo Rhythm)

SÆRE GAMLE VILLA – "Bedste Ven" EP

Copenhagen post-punk with some definite nods to their city's dark punk past. Mid-tempo and brooding with echoing vocals pushed way up front—it's almost too high in the mix for my tastes. The songs have good hooks and are memorable, but a couple of them sound almost identical. Still, it's really driving and intense. Side two is composed solely of the outro song, which feels like it goes nowhere and doesn't contribute much to the overall feel of the record. It's confusing, but side one is good. Members of OND TRO. (GH)
(Travesty)

SCIENCE MAN – LP

Frantic, thrashy record by one-man band SCIENCE MAN. It's got an industrial-sounding drum machine and noodling metal guitar licks. The vocals are distorted, screechy, and dramatic. It's loud, wild and fun. (CK)
(Swimming Faith)

SHEENJEK – "Volume 1" EP

Hypnotic, shoegazing psyche-influenced bar rock with a grunge twang that I kind of love. The vocals are great, and definitely have a punk howling that has matured like fine mead. All the good parts of FUCKED UP, the *Twin Peaks* soundtrack, and the MERMEN. A solid, timeless, rock release. A short and sweet EP, like this review. (JR)
(Seventh Rule)

SOME GIFTS – "Facts?!?" CD

So this punky indie rock bands reminds me of ARCHERS OF LOAF, KNAPSACK, and THE PIXIES. Good influences, but not nearly on that level. There needs to be more new bands like this, but I just wish the tunes here grabbed me more. (RL)
(self-released)

SPAZZ – "La Revancha" CD

If you're a fan of powerviolence, SPAZZ should be one of the first five bands that come to your mind. This album originally came out in 1997, and it stands the test of time. SPAZZ has the humor, the riffs to back it up, and they play it in their patented no-slow-all-go style that is a runaway bullet train driving off of a cliff into space. Fuck you. SPAZZ forever. (GH)
(Tankcrimes)

SPORTEN ÄR DÖD – LP

This looks exactly as it sounds: three cool teenage punk girls making tremulous punk rock with songs dedicated to John Peel, Bruce from the JAM, and their favorite chocolate bar! This isn't wild screaming KBD mania, they have a nervous restrained quality, which is not to say this sounds inept, just that it isn't the manic punk insanity you might expect from a teenage Swedish band circa 1981. They called their band Sport is Dead, and formed as a result of being fans of the BUZZCOCKS and the UNDERTONES, and you can hear the nervous pop sensibility! I've seen comparisons to DOLLY MIXTURE and LILLIPUT, but I would say that is not the case here, they are not as polished as the former and not as wild as the latter. They have their own contained punk concept and identity that doesn't sound like a collage of other ideas. This is a reissue of their demo tape with a live performance on the B-side. It sounds great and is definitely worth picking up for all fans of that underground girl sound, the sound of youth inspired by the DIY ideal… (LG)
(Fördämning Arkiv)

STRANGE PASSAGE – "Shouldn't Be Too Long" LP

Lyrical, literate jangle-pop with melodies galore and a ton of personality. STRANGE PASSAGES definitely seem to draw inspiration from '80s indie sounds, which is no bad thing. The bright production emphasizes the guitar interplay, while the dedication to songcraft shines through. I'm no REM fan, but this makes me think of that band's more upbeat, less over-wrought material—especially in the vocals. Great stuff. (AM)
(Syncro System)

SWEET J.A.P. – "Be My Venus" LP

To be honest, with this moniker, and ridiculous album cover art which falls somewhere betwixt a long lost LOVERBOY record and maybe the "least memorable emo band from the next town over's third LP from 1997," I did not have high hopes. It's pretty damn killer, though. At first, this just seemed like somewhat likeable, dirty-yet-probably-hot rocker dude styled HELLACOPTERS-by-way-of-Minneapolis heroin type of bullshit, but this shit is fucking great on repeat. Innernettes research says this band broke up in 2004, and these are outtakes from their sixteen-year-old album, but it's remarkably fresh and urgent, energetic as hell, basement bound rock'n'roll. The kind of rock'n'roll you pay attention to. It looks like I missed the boat on this band, and I am a lesser person because of that. I'm sorry I've let you down, Dad. (DZ)
(Big Neck)

TALK WRONG – "Feral Bearings" EP

The blank side of this EP holds beautifully silkscreened plants and leaves, and though they're simple, I love them. They are pretty and delicate, which did not set me up for the music. This is sad dude music in the same vein as the LAWRENCE ARMS or the METHADONES. It's modern punk rock for sad kids that can still drink a few beers and make it home to sleep in their own filth somewhat responsibly, but just dangerously enough to concern their parents and close friends who have watched them slowly deteriorate. This is lose your voice and forget half the night material. "Pill to Swallow" starts out with the singer shouting *"Cigarettes bring out the worst in you,"* and it felt like it was directed at me. Stop judging me, sir. (RH)
(Ersatz Reality)

THESE BASTARDS – "Old and Pissed" EP

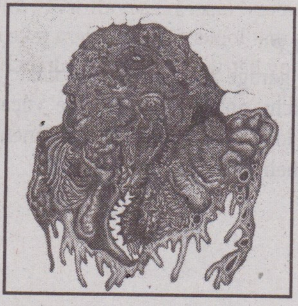
Here are some old thrashers out of San Francisco showing the youngsters how to shed for real! No fucking bullshit, blaring hardcore chock full of blastbeat venom and foaming-at-the-mouth rage. Like most folks from the Bay Area, their anger is directed squarely at techies and the rest of the Silicon Valley nightmare, even invoking the Unabomber in one song. If you love '90 Bay Area powerviolence and hate your smartphone, check this out. (BA)
(self-released)

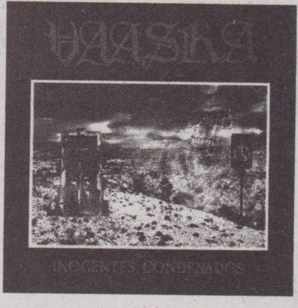
VAASKA – "Inocentes Condenados" EP

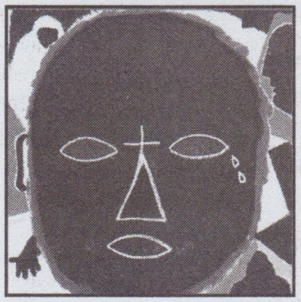
Austin, Texas' VAASKA play six ripping tracks of high-pitched, '80s Finnish inspired hardcore, echoing brutal flavor and a buzzing guitar tone that is stinging, with confident lyrics in Spanish spat forth with furious power. Crushing hardcore along the lines of MELLAKKA, RAJOITUS, and LAMA. I can't say anything bad about the release, and yet I struggle to find a particularly stand out thing about it. It clobbers with D-beat fire, and the tones are freakishly coarse static hissing. That's the big takeaway. My hearing loss. (JR)
(Beach Impediment)

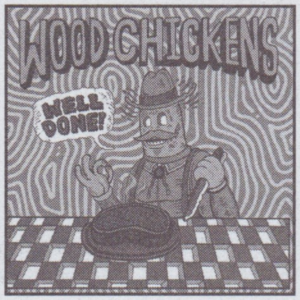
RICHARD VAIN – "Night Jammer" LP

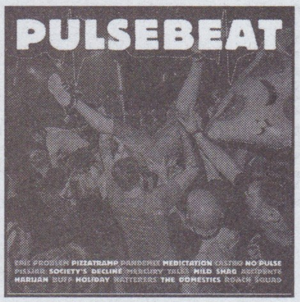
Big, full-sounding indie jams here from this Chicago trio that includes an ex-PONY. The first track builds up from a brooding, proggy intro into a fuzzed-out krautrock jam that sets the tone for the rest of the album. Bleeding shards of guitar keen around organ-driven melodies atop a relentless drum boogie. The vocals drip with slacker ennui that falls somewhere between THEE OH SEES and DINOSAUR. The opening track and "Punks Inbred" are the standout tracks for me, but overall this is a strong, cohesive album. (AM)
(Big Neck)











TIMMY VULGAR'S GENETIC ARMAGEDDON – "Music from the Other Side of the Swamp" LP

I'm afraid TIMMY VULGAR might be getting too stuck in his ways. I wouldn't say this record is predictable, but I've come to expect his records to sound like this. VULGAR plays all the instruments on this LP, as well as singing in his distinctive, emotive style. The guitars are wailing, and the synths are soaring. The sounds are raw and futuristically primitive. "Suction Cup Hands" is my favorite song on the LP. It's got a catchy guitar riff that combines nicely with the rhythm track and VULGAR's rambling vocal. It's pretty cool. (CK)
(Mind Meld)

WITCHES HAMMER – "Mortalas" EP

This. Is. Awesome! I did a double-take when I saw this in my pile of records to review, as the only WITCHES HAMMER I knew of was the legendary Canadian thrash metal band, and sure enough this is a reissue of their debut release. Musically, it's an absolute milestone in crossover history: raw and frantic, with an obvious punk influence bubbling below the surface (D-Beats are present, for example). It was and is a great record, but the most appealing element of this package is the amazing, hefty booklet which includes band photos, flyers (WITCHES HAMMER performed plenty of DIY gigs with the likes of SNFU, the ACCÜSED, the BONELESS ONES, DOA, and VERBAL ABUSE), and a lengthy band history by guitarist Marco that makes it very clear that the band were more comfortable interacting with and performing for Vancouver's punk scene than metalheads. Supreme Echo have put together a superlative package here, the remastered material sounds great, the pocket sleeve is sturdy and glossy, and the booklet is as good as anything you'd get from a reissue label like Radio Raheem or GTA. This'll obviously mostly appeal to the crossover-curious, but anyone with an interest in Canadian punk history will enjoy the archival material included. This is a top-quality reissue and one that I am surprised and pleased to see included in the pages and archives of *MRR*. (AU)
(Supreme Echo)

WOOD CHICKENS – "Well Done" LP

I seem to recall the last record I reviewed from these goofy chaps as being a hokey, countryfied, fake-ass punk hoedown that I surprisingly totally loved the absolute shit out of. Although it seems like they have hit the acid pretty hard since we last met, I still love it, even though I realize that it makes no sense that I do. Opening your record with an instrumental surf number, throwing around lazer noises all willy nilly, monosyllabic wailing, with album art that looks like a modern take on Rip Off Press (but from space). Cowboy hat-wearing, reverb-drenched country punk is something that I would absolutely adore to make fun of, but just like their earlier output, this is surprisingly fun as fucking hell. This comparison might only affect about twenty five readers, and they would most certainly all be as old and as Southern as I am, but try and imagine a modern take on early DASH RIP ROCK, but punk enough that you wouldn't be ashamed of it, or have to explain your adoration of it to your kids. Sorry, but this is good. (DZ)
(Big Neck)

V/A – "Live at Raul's" LP

Despite being a Texan and a Texas punk enthusiast, I never heard *Live At Raul's*. I always assumed it was more important to be equipped with the BIG BOYS/DICKS *Recorded Live At Raul's* LP (it is). Raul's was a club in Austin that accidentally became a hub for new wave/punk in the late '70s through the early '80s, and these tracks were crisply captured via mobile studio. Five local bands, two tracks each, many of which were unreleased at the time. The EXPLOSIVES, TERMINAL MIND, and the SKUNKS tracks are all edgy rock, the latter two being the punkest. STANDING WAVES are more new wave, while the NEXT is the most confrontational and best, as I expected. With the exception of the NEXT tracks, it all errs on the side of pop rock. This reissue is limited to 500 copies, and has a reproduction of the flyer for the gig, and some decent live band shots. Live records are polarizing but I am happy to report that it's easy to forget this is live until the applause at the end of the tracks. Essential? No, unless you're a completist. (MA)
(Steadyboy)

V/A – "Pulsebeat" LP

As we witness the decay of the physical parts of punk, like the disappearance of the printed word and the records we used to hold in our hands, one of the earliest casualties was always going to be the compilation LP. These motherfuckers are hard to make good, you know? It's like going to those goddamn ten band bill shows, where five people watch the band they came to see, and everyone goes outside to smoke during the rest of the night. So when I hear a comp LP in 2019 of bands I've never heard of and find it to be completely listenable *and* varied, I get pretty fucking stoked. Slobbery two-finger metal, tolerable Fat stuff, pop punk, dark synthy post-punk, drooling robo punk, cleaned-up crust, and even some fucking ska metal. I gotta hand it to these fine folks, as this is all over the place and still not fucking terrible. There's a shit ton of sneer and bile in almost all the vocals, like every singer went to the same laryngitis-inducing singing school. Seventeen tracks, and financed by seven different record labels, which is kinda goofy, but hey, that's the price you gotta pay to put out records in a time when nobody is buying. Definitely worth checking out. (DZ)
(Boss Tuneage / Brassneck / Kibou / Little Rocket / Pumpkin / TNS / Urinal Vinyl)

V/A – "Tuna Forsushi Records Presents: Live Your Gimmick Deuce" CD

A compilation of four bands whose collective goal as described by the CD's narrator is to "take back punk" from the people who impose the punk rules. Isn't that supposed to be *MRR*? NEVER SAY DIE play rockabilly-ish redneck rock. SUPERMEN are macho ANTISEEN types. THE RUNZ play anthemic hard rock. LONG LOST ENEMIES are poppy hardcore. Eh. Good luck. (CK)
(Tuna Forsushi)

CONTACTS

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Action Boys: actionboys.bandcamp.com
Alien Snatch: aliensnatch.de
Almost Ready: almostreadyrecords.com;
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Bare Minimum: thebareminimum.ca
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DC-Jam: dcjamrecords.com
Dead Broke: deadbrokerecords.com;
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Deviance: deviancerecords.com
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Different Kitchen: differentkitchen.bigcartel.com
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Dunkel Ziffer: dunkelzifferrecords.de/de
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Missing The Point: missing the pointdistro.blogspot.com
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Radical Fun: radicalfuntime@live.com
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Schizophrenic: schizophrenicrecords.bigcartel.com
Seventh Rule: releases.seventhrule.com
Shaking Heads: shakingheadsgbg@gmail.com
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TNS: tnsrecords.co.uk
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Total Punk: floridasdying.com
Travesty: travestymusic.bandcamp.com
Tuna Forsushi: facebook.com/tunaforsushirecords
Urinal Vinyl: urinalvinyl.com
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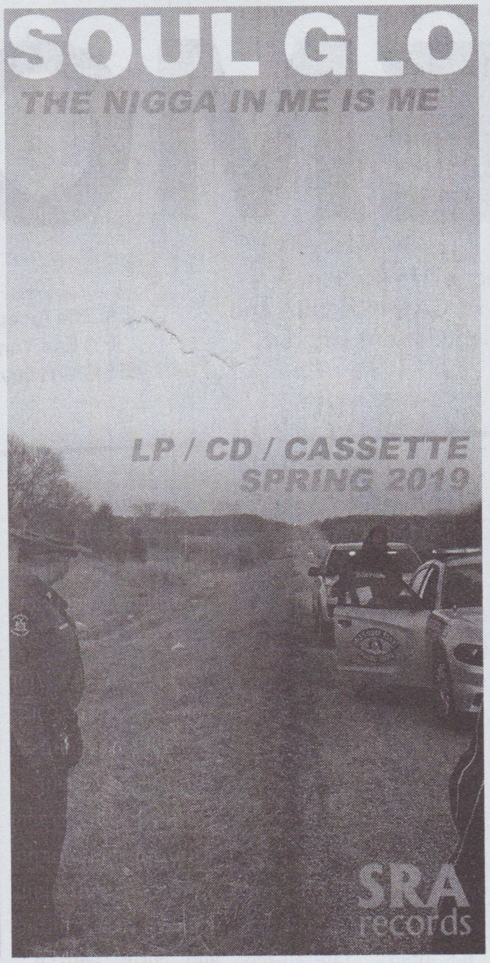
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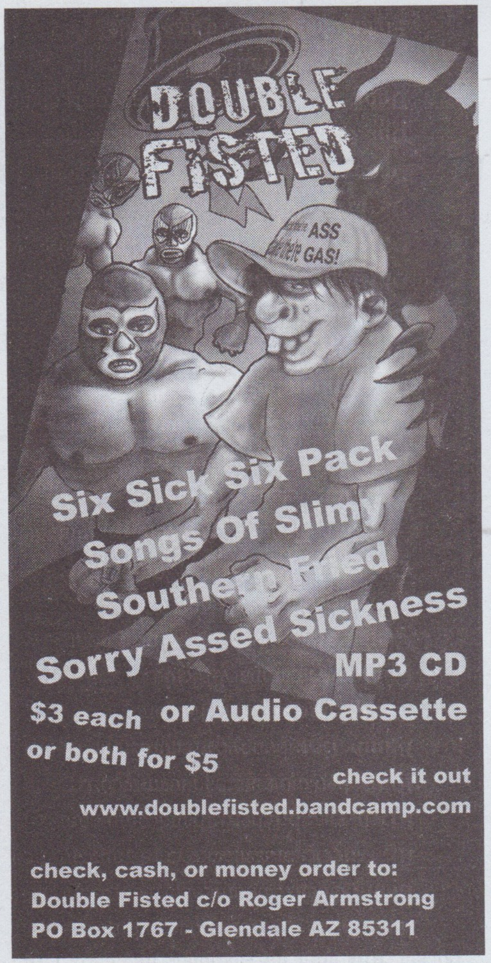
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DEMOS

All cassettes and CD-Rs are reviewed in this section. Send yours to PO Box 3852, Oakland, CA 94609 USA and include your contact information. Submissions without artwork will not be considered.

(EA) Eric Arnouville
(EY) Erin Yanke
(GH) Greg Harvester
(MA) Matt Badenhop
(WN) Robert Collins

BENDERHEADS – *Illusion Dweller* – It's like the weirdest future-age D-beat, but not really D-beat, but still definitely a D-beat band. Awkward lurches present like a thunderous gallop recreated in analog slow motion and every component is blown to smithereens so it just feels so weird to listen to. It's a calculated destruction…they just aren't in a hurry. (WN) (8-song cassette, lyrics included, vinylconflict.bandcamp.com)

BIG HOG / THE RESOURCE NETWORK – *Tour Tape* – Blown-out as fuck weirdo ass hardcore from two well paired groups from Indianapolis. The recording literally sounds like it was captured live from a slam-dancer's pocket. Rhythmically deranged like early DIE KREUZEN and as intense and destroyed as TAR BABIES. I don't even feel like it's necessary to distinguish between the two bands, aside from the fact that the BIG HOG tracks are a bit more spastic and titled "Metallica," "Pantera," and "Slayer" (personally I'd take "Megadeth" over "Pantera"). (MA) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, theresourcenetwork.bandcamp.com)

BREEZE – *Fresh Whiffs / The Guilty Baby* – Two man improv dealing in bloops and blips, regressive synth and pained vocal outbursts. Weirdo guitar riffing erupts in the background, providing glimpses into madness. This is what cassettes were made for. (GH) (4-song cassette, lyrics not included, breezemj.bandcamp.com)

BURNOUT – *Primal Code* – Arizona's fukkn fiercest export are back with three doses of devastation. When they go slow, BURNOUT are just terrifying, and their blasts are all consuming…this is the modern incarnation of powerviolence if you want it to be. Hopelessly heavy, and ending the title track with that EARTH CRISIS chug was a brilliant move. (WN) (3-song cassette, lyrics included, burnout.bandcamp.com)

CONCUSSION – Lazy comparison: WIPERS meets pre-1989 SONIC YOUTH at a BLITZ show in 1982, then starts a band in North Carolina after the world ends. As this reviewer tries to dig a little deeper, I feel like maybe the SONIC YOUTH thing is a stretch, but there's something about the way CONCUSSION manage to sound a little off, a little challenged, while still just stomping the shit out of the aggressive melodic punk that the Southeastern US has made famous. Sign me up. (WN) (4-song cassette, lyrics included, concussionnc@gmail.com)

CORONARY – *Demo 2018* – Middle of the road hardcore from Chicago. Vocally it's pretty "rah-rah-rah" and burly, with a few '90s moments in terms of rhythm and backup screams. One posi track, one self-reflective, and a few responses to the general rise of hate and injustice in the world. A young METALLICA photo appears in the layout, as well as "Metallica Demollica 2018" stamped on the cassette shell...but we are seemingly on the outside of that joke. (MA) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, coronary.bandcamp.com)

DAGGER – *Hexes* – Totally satisfying, clenched-fist hardcore from Indiana. There are more forays into mid-tempo than on their previous ace EP, recalling some of the best early FUCKED UP material. The fast songs are obviously where it's at, short and scathing with hammering drums. The vocals have a monotonous grating quality but they're so pissed that it still works for me. Lyrically they express personal pain as well as call out the rise of the right/fascists, most obviously in "This Country Was Never Great," which is a factual statement. (MA) (7-song cassette, lyrics included, notnormaltapes.bandcamp.com)

DEATH LOTTERY – Loose and feisty (and wildly addictive) garage shits presented with maximum aggression and attitude. Makes this reviewer think he's listening to some '90s SF Purple Onion jams. You can practically feel the beer spraying all over you….but there's more dirty punk than hipster bar trash going down here, and they're from South Florida, so that says a lot. I'm intrigued, I'm engaged… fukk it, I'm in. (WN) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, cheapmiami.bandcamp.com)

DIGITAL LEATHER – *Headache Heaven* – I haven't checked in on DIGITAL LEATHER in over ten years (since *Blow Machine* to be exact), and I see he's remained quite prolific since then. Many of these songs are slow and *looooong* and repetitive and lose me easily. The best ones are electronic, like '80s new wave pop hits darkened a bit but still with a playful quality. (MA) (21-song cassette, lyrics not included, nocoastrecordings.bandcamp.com)

E.D.S. – *Probation* – This is perfect music. This shit makes me sweat just listening to it. Incredibly fast-paced, loud, *furious* music and I can't understand a word that comes out of the vocalist's mouth without assistance from the lyrics sheet that was thankfully provided. The production here is really remarkable—it's that in between of DIY and overproduced, that sweet spot where it's just perfectly recorded for a band that sounds this urgent. Shout out to Aaron Van Allen and Alex Nagle for the production of this thing. At its core it is nothing more than just run-of-the-mill hardcore. There's nothing particularly unique that makes E.D.S. stand out—but maybe that's not a bad thing? I'm of the opinion that not every record needs to touch on new ground, and sometimes you can never have too much of a good thing. That's the case here. Good shit. (EA) (4-song cassette, lyrics included, exciteddeliriumsyndrome.bandcamp.com).

EEPHUS – *Gift Shark* – I guess this is grown up punk, right? Not complaining, man, not complaining at all. I mean…FOGHAT was barely fifteen years in the rearview mirror when I started listening to hardcore, and I made fun of old burners who listened to classic rock radio, so I'm definitely not judging. Because maybe we have just found *our* classic rock. Chicago's EEPHUS come

with a pedigree, they know what they are doing—their piercing guitars slice through tuneful backing vocals, their songs get stuck in your head like you've known them for years…and maybe you have? A smattering of angular Rough Trade sensibilities, a sweaty Midwest basement, a collection of hooks… and *voila*. (WN) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, eephus.bandcamp.com)

EXTRAVISION – Irish queer post-punk from a refreshingly focused group that seems to know exactly what they want. So what do they want? A versatile set of songs that puts on display just how good each and every performer here is. That is especially the case with the vocalist, who owns every track on this thing. The lyrics are very well thought out here as well, and the delivery puts a lot of emphasis on those sobering lyrical moments that show up throughout this tape. There are plenty of moments on this thing where I'm really taken aback by how talented all these people are. It's not the fast hardcore I'm usually looking for, but sometimes a post-punk band like this comes along that really knows what's up. (EA) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, extravision.bandcamp.com)

FEALTY – Loud, headache-inducing hardcore where you'll frequently have trouble differentiating the sounds you're hearing. Not necessarily a bad thing, and FEALTY pull it off pretty well. My favorite thing is that there doesn't seem to be a lead vocalist. The two vocalists just kind of trade off back and forth whenever they feel like it, resulting in a loose and playful feel, even though they are both just taking turns screaming at you. This tape isn't really anything special but it'll get you pumped up, no problem there. Sometimes that's all you want or need in a record. (EA) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, fealty.bandcamp.com)

GHASTLY, INDIANA – *Nowhere Is Perfect* – J CHURCH meets BRYAN ADAMS, but with really absolutely godawful vocals. Sorry punks, the vocals are so so so very bad, and they stifle almost every breath of these songs, some of which are actually pretty good in a 14-year-old trying to sound like JAWBREAKER kind of way, but most of which are pretty awkward and sloppy in an "*oof*, this is really bad" kind of way. (WN) (12-song cassette, lyrics included, ghastlyband@gmail.com, c/o Let's Pretend Records, PO Box 1663, Bloomington, IN 47402)

GIRL DRINK DRUNKS – Good ass, high energy punk rock. Somewhere in the BUZZCOCKS/OBSERVERS sonic lineage, these Portland burners simply rip and they make you want to tear a hole in your floor while they're doing it. The whole damn thing flies by in an instant and these ears just want more. (WN) (12-song cassette, lyrics not included, girldrinkdrunks.bandcamp.com)

GLASS BODY – Airy '90s college/alt rock. Far from bad, with a clunky low end rumble that adds an awkward authenticity. (WN) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, grasslipsrecords.org)

THE GODDAMN RIGHTS – *Anyone Who Ever Loved You Was Wrong* – Some pretty blood-pumping hardcore with old-school metal influences. I wouldn't say it's particularly engaging, but I did dig their sound. There were moments where they went on some noise-rock dirges that made my toes curl up a bit, and that's what music's for. There were some less-than-outstanding lyrical content here and there, some of it properly questionable (most notably on the closing track "40 Yard Dash"), but for the most part, I'll give this one a thumbs-up. (EA) (9-song CD-R, lyrics not included, thegoddamnrights.bandcamp.com)

HOOD RATS – *Trash Party* – I swear that every month there's at least one demo that completely knock me on my ass, something completely new to me that blows my pants off. This month that demo is from Montreal's HOOD RATS. From the opening notes of "Off Drugs and Miserable" their mission is abundantly clear: annihilation. Garage punk has rarely sounded this fierce, this filthy, and this off the rails. Combine that attack with pure nihilism, excessive consumption and serious chops and you're in for a wallop. *Blood, Guts*-era DWARVES, early MOTÖRHEAD, modern freeks like METH SORES…highest possible recommendation. *Trash Party* is the very embodiment of maximum rock'n'roll. (WN) (10-song cassette, lyrics included, hoodratsbooking@gmail.com, girlsville.bandcamp.com)

HOWLER – Vaguely dark indie/dream pop rooted in early '90s college/alt rock. That might make you wonder if HOWLER has any place in this rag at all, and you wouldn't be out of line to wonder. But good is good, y'all. Plus, the the roots are here and even though HOWLER are clean and precise and saccharine sweet in the pretty parts, there's an edge to everything, even Wendy's lilt. Highly recommend getting on this train before it leaves our station. (WN) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, howler-band.bandcamp.com)

THE HULLMEN – *Hearts of Stone* – Another three-track disc, but this one has some decently long songs (four minutes?!). A lot of fun psychedelic punk here, with a decent amount of progression in the instrumentation that kept me interested and engaged throughout. I'm not saying it really managed to grab my full, undivided attention, but I was always listening for those subtle or not-so-subtle changes in the tempo, key, swing, or structure and that made this pretty dang entertaining, buds. (EA) (3-song CD-R, lyrics not included, thehullmen.bandcamp.com)

THE IT'S ALIVES – Self-described as "B-movie punk," THE IT'S ALIVES are fun and poppy. I was expecting more of a horror-punk vibe, but they sound legitimately like fun basement pop punk from 1997. Short, to-the-point and they have a great ear for melody. I'm into it. (GH) (9-song cassette, lyrics not included, billupsallen@gmail.com, c/o Billups Allen, 137 N Auburndale St, Memphis, TN 38104)

KIVIRANTA – *Dolce Vita* – Biting, laid back Finnish garage punk. Drum machine driven, echo laden, somehow sounds like 1982 Spanish magic, fuzzed and brilliant guitar leads, cold and mechanical. Weird and wild and very controlled—very into it. (WN) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, suolavesirecords@gmail.com)

KNEE-JERK – Three hot, steaming tracks of hardcore fun flinging directly at your face. Each under two minutes (one of them under a minute), they're fast as all hell, and they're incredibly angry. I love albums that make me double-check the disc to make sure it's not playing too fast or something. Also gotta appreciate a release that's three tracks long and only totals up to about three minutes. (EA) (3-song CD-R, lyrics not included, knee-jerkmusic.bandcamp.com)

LIPID – *Freak Beat* – More true mutant sounds from Virginia's Vinyl Conflict label, this one appears to start with the line *"I live my life, I don't give a fukk,"* and you know I'm on board immediately. Brutally snarky mid-tempo raw punk with all of the shit-fi chaos you'd expect from the faster versions of this animal, LIPID are like FLIPPER reborn 2017 NYC…and then they go fast and you were already hooked so now you're just devastated. Not many bands sound like no one else, and LIPID are pure LIPID on this demo. Also, there's a track called "Nuclear Masturbation." (WN) (7-song cassette, lyrics not included, vinylconflict.bandcamp.com)

MALOKIO – Classic early West Coast punk à la NASTY FACTS (even though they're from NY) or AVENGERS, this Montreal outfit is instantly addictive and is worthy of every lofty comparison I could bestow upon them. Up front buzzsaw *punk* guitars and a pounding rhythm section lay the foundation

for Lisa's vocals that positively beg for universal participation. Absolutely killer demo. (WN) (4-song cassette, lyrics included, malokio.bandcamp.com)

THE MIGHTY JABRONIS – The MIGHTY JABRONIS rock less hard on this demo than it seems they would in person. It's difficult to capture the live experience in recording, and live recordings are shit mostly. So, this stripped down rocker band probably speeds up their songs under the influence of well liquor or cheap beer and would bring the energy and sloppiness that actually adds to the rock'n'roll experience! But that's conjecture. They love wrestling, and write almost all their songs about it. They chant "U-S-A" in one of the wrestling songs, which I think is inappropriate. I think "Wooo" and "Loser Leaves Town" are reminiscent of CAPTAIN 9S AND THE KNICKERBOCKER TRIO, "Heartpunch my Heart" is a catchy slower number, maybe my favorite on the record, and "Wrestling on the Weekend" is a total wasted changed-the-lyrics cover of "Working on the Weekend." Excellent wrestlers collage art on the actual disc. So, in general basic garage rock band with a bit of shtick and also self awareness. (EY) (9-song cassette, lyrics not included, themightyjabronis.bandcamp.com)

THE MOLDS – *Saltine* – Basically upbeat indie rock with smooth vocals sung low and dreamy clean guitars. The cool song structures are notable, and some of the melodies hit that sweet spot. I'm too overwhelmed by the dreaminess but if that's your thing, look no further. (MA) (10-song cassette, lyrics not included, volarrecords.bandcamp.com)

MOLISMA – *Tainted Mass* – I'm not crazy about the grating vocals on this one, though these Greek punks are really putting their entire heart and soul into this thing though. The drummer especially deserves recognition here—as a drummer myself, I have no idea how this dude's foot is still attached to his leg. That's honestly a note that can be applied to most hardcore punk drummers, it ain't easy on our legs! These guys are really going wild, and who am I to spoil the fun? On their bandcamp, one of the tags listed is "hell," and I think that's as apt a descriptor as any. Also listed: "fat kids on cholesterol," so do with that as you will. Can't say I'll relisten to this one, but that doesn't negate its worth. Maybe I'm too nice to diss hardworking punks? (EA) (7-song cassette, lyrics included, molisma.bandcamp.com)

MUSAVI – The whole picture here is a lot like the entirety of *Zen Arcade*; lots going on that you could describe individually but wouldn't give an accurate picture of the whole. "Gelatate" is my favorite, scratching the same itch as SPRAYPAINT, weird and moving and rockin. MUSAVI is cool, keep it up! (EY) (4-song cassette, lyrics not included, musaviband.bandcamp.com)

NIXON EXHIBITIO – Complete freak show punk, NIXON EXHIBITIO is (was?) a one day recording project from KALEIDOSCOPE personnel, leaving only these six tracks in their wake. Spastic art punk delivered in erratic bursts with no adherence to anything approaching acceptable, keyboards and banjos are equally at home on this release, which listens like CCTV on Adderall (yes, I'm aware of how redundant that assertion sounds) and/or MINUTEMEN on a NAPALM *Scum* bender. Shit is weird, y'all, good luck finding and/or understanding. (WN) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, no contact info)

THE PATHOGENS – The very embodiment of a Bay Area Supergroup, the PATHOGENS check every box with their first full-length release. Dual male/female vocals (from Jesse/BLATZ and Cinder/TILT) are up front at all times and as snarky as ever, wearing their early Gilman pedigree as a badge of honor. You can knock this band as a crew of old has-beens if you want but it'd be your fukkn loss. The PATHOGENS play urgent punk about being a freak, about being a weirdo, about living through the bullshit *and* fighting the bullshit, about celebrating and about dancing your ass off…and they have been doing all of those things for a very long time. Catchy, feisty, and zero fukks given. (WN) (14-song cassette, lyrics not included, thepathogens1.bandcamp.com)

PIETIES – *Demo Tape* – Making your recording lo-fi and purposefully thin and shitty sounding is kinda whack, but in cases like this it's everything. Scraggly guitars and bratty vocals are well propped up by a competent foundation of bass and rhythm. The program decays from an upbeat opener to a vocal/beat-less, no wave closer. The whole thing is calculated and intentional, while still giving off a reckless ineptitude, partly disguised with a shit-fi filter...make sense? Moreso cool than pretentious. (MA) (4-song cassette, lyrics not included, nervousenergyrecords.bandcamp.com)

PRISONER – Ten songs of punk-pop perfection with synthy new wave flourishes all by one solitary guy in Manor, Texas. Seriously, this whole tape feels immediate and alive, and was refreshing to hear. Layers of guitars fill up space in jittery, anxious songs about feeling like an idiot and having a hard time in this fucking world. Sometimes, it's a little REATARD-core, but it also pays homage to isolative southern weirdos and is not afraid to sound tender when it's necessary. This is easily one of my favorite tapes of the month. (GH) (10-song cassette, lyrics not included, prisonertexas.bandcamp.com)

QUICK FIX – Fast and bouncy shit that teeters on the verge of pogo worship and lays a blanket of over treated high femme vocals over the entire mix. UK82 meets crisp modern Midwest mutant hardcore. Urgent, powerful, good. (WN) (5-song cassette, lyrics included, quickfixshc.bandcamp.com)

SERENO – *Desapegos e Previsoes de Morte* – Shoegazey-style indie punk from Rio de Janeiro that appears fairly tame, but has strong hooks and melodies. SERENO has a strong sense of controlled noise in the background, almost curated like soundscapes, but it always feels tightly reined in. This is only the second release by this band but they sound like they've been playing for years. (GH) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, serenofrio.bandcamp.com)

SLUGS – *Human Warmth* – A weird one to pin down, but Gothenburg's SLUGS fit somewhere into '90s grunge throwback, though I can't tell if that's the intention. The vocals are awkward and sung in a low register. The title track is like an amateurish take on something from the first DANZIG album. Rhythmically the range is slow to loose hi-hat mid tempo. A big shrug for this one. (MA) (4-song cassette, lyrics included, slugsgbg.bandcamp.com)

SLUGS – *Long Live the New Flesh* – This almost sounds like a parody. I don't mean that as an insult—the vocalist sounds like he's doing a voice someone would make when doing a tongue-in-cheek jab at punk music. It sounds like the music equivalent of a cartoon. I love it. All the musicians seem to subdue themselves pretty frequently on this thing, which adds to its weirdness. You can't take this one seriously, but I had a lot of fun with it. (EA) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, slugsgbg.bandcamp.com)

STICKER SHOCK – Ahhh, this is cool! Kind of a mash-up between hardcore and garage punk to make a hybrid that is garagecore. Garage riffs played at hardcore energy levels and speed. Super fucking catchy and instantly addictive for instant pogo action! Shitty bands should be taking notes from STICKER SHOCK. (GH) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, stickershock.bandcamp.com)

TAKE YOUR MEDICINE – Hard to describe how weird the guitars sound here, and how much it adds to TAKE YOUR MEDICINE's outsider sound. The band starts and stops and changes time with seemingly no rhyme or reason, the vocals are filthy, but sometimes the guitars sound like a stoner version of the DS-13 *Killed By The Kids* LP, while the band is dropping MEDICATION TIME caliber insanity. It's a weird ass collection of vibes and it really works. Super heavy, off-putting rage. It's hardcore, to be sure, but it's so many other things at the same time. Yeah… I'm down. (WN) (8-song cassette, no lyrics, takeyourmeds.bandcamp.com)

TANGENT – *Fit* – Nothing but fire from the opening burst, Philadelphia solo project TANGENT weaves Reatard-caliber hooks in and out of Blinko-esque inward darkness. *Fit* listens like an undiscovered gem that you cannot put in a place, probably because it was created in isolation. An instantly compelling project. (WN) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, salinasigel538@gmail.com, estrangedcommunications.bandcamp.com)

TOP DECK – I don't know what the fuck the vocalist was doing over all these songs, but I hope to God he doesn't stop. I replayed these five songs about ten times before writing this, and I'll probably play them ten more times after I'm done. I wasn't really able to tell what the hell the vocalist was saying the whole time, but that's okay. I love bands where I don't really know what's going on, like FLYKILLS. This isn't exactly like FLYKILLS, but it's not *not* like FLYKILLS. Here's what it is, though: great fast-paced music to get you pumped up and whacked out. I'll be damned if "One, Seven, Six Six Six" isn't one of my favorite songs of the year, or the cacophonous "Adrian Atkins," which takes me through a loop every time I replay it. Two big thumbs up from me. (EA) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, topdeck.bandcamp.com)

TOWANDA – *Freak Of Nurture* – Witchy fukkn East Coast outfit that simply refuse to land anywhere and just take their space freak sludge wherever they want to. Colossal tonnage and psychedelic chaos crammed into the confines of the classic power trio, and then they drop into the open highway lurch of "Pain Now, Pain Later" and you're just doomed. (WN) (4-song cassette, lyrics not included, towandatheband@gmail.com, girlsville.bandcamp.com)

TRASHCAN DANCE – *Sleaze Pop* – TRASHCAN DANCE are horror and glam and goth and very *draammaatttiiiiic*. They have a mid-tempo beat with decent riffs, and the vocals are half sung and half shouted, but occasionally creep talking style. There are some cool synth tones throughout, but it's mostly guitar driven. They get really '80s—think JOE JACKSON pop song with "#suicideselfie," and then back to the current pop goth treatment until the end with "Pissing Blood," which features the best chorus of the whole demo: *"Now you need to take a shower... take a shower."* (EY) (6-songs CD-R, lyrics not included trashcandance1.bandcamp.com)

TRASHY – This is a tightly-wound queer-punk record with a decent DIY edge to it. TRASHY falls a little too closely on melodic pop punk for my tastes, but I'm sure there are many people who would get a lot of enjoyment out of this fun little 5-song disc. The songwriting is clever though, and there are a lot of great ideas here and there. (EA) (5-song CD-R, lyrics included, trashypunx.bandcamp.com)

VAIAPRAIA E AS RAINHAS DO BAILE – *Amor Duro* – The opening title track is the winner here, on a short list of absolutely essential nuggets from this month's listens…a dark, deranged, awkward, infectious, passionate missive that shows bandleader Rodrigo let off leash for a two minute monologue, setting the stage for a mixture of stripped down garage punk overtaken by psychedelics and freedom. "Fantasmas Sem Armas" takes five minutes to build to a swell that lasts but a few seconds, taking a deconstructed SPIRITUALIZED and making it urgent and present for a blip before fading away. It's hard to tell if this Portuguese trio is manipulating punk or dosing synthesized ambience with hits of rock, but either way the result is brilliant. (WN) (3-song cassette, lyrics not included, vaiapraia.bandcamp.com)

VERTIGO – *V2* – VERTIGO is everywhere! This VERTIGO is from Australia, and plays murky hardcore that speeds up and slows down, while the guitar ignores what's going on and sounds like it's playing through an EKG Machine instead of an amp. Then there are the parts that function as instrumental breaks where someone is behind you, checking out your responses and creeping on you. Then, back to hardcore with guitar effects and then off the map again. The vocals are lower than the guitar, and he's yelling at us and at bigger things. There's one song where there's a lot of scoffing. Total hit! (EY) (7-song cassette, lyrics not included, antifaderecords.bandcamp.com)

VIDEO DUCT – *Small Pets And Kitchenettes* – NIKKI SUDDEN reborn as a bedroom knife toke, these are monotonous, tortured, dub heavy no wave transmissions. The kind of act you expect to accidentally see in the basement of a third-rate secondhand clothes store on a rainy metropolitan weeknight. There's nothing at all cool about Missouri's VIDEO DUCT, which exactly why VIDEO DUCT is extremely fukkn cool…equally mysterious and prolific, I feel like this is going to be a *"look back in ten years and how did I miss this"* band for a lot of people. Essential damage. (WN) (10-song cassette, lyrics not included, mapledeathrecords.com)

VITTNA – *2 Songs + Live At The Hive* – Title pretty much explains it, right? Two tracks from the fierce fukkn s/t EP on Bunker Punks and three live bangers recorded in 2018. Lightspeed stomps with a COC-meets-Kubinski snarl. Adding the live tracks to this teaser tape was a brilliant move… because these kids are straight fire. If you like hardcore *punk*, then you like this band a lot. (WN) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, vittnapunx@gmail.com)

VOL – *2* – The duo of Nordeele and Majerk are back with two live sets of their improv guitar and sax meditations/freak-outs. Side One is a live set in Chicago where it sounds like they set a timer for each jam, giving themselves about a minute for each song to get its point across. Some improv can be tedious (not VOL) so setting a timer is definitely not the worst idea and should be enforced in many other genres. Side Two is a longer freak out from a show in Oakland that ends as abruptly as it begins and showcases the more abrasive skronk of free jazz. (GH) (?? song cassette, lyrics not included, vvooll.org)

WOMBOMBS – Surfy garage rock from Florida, complete with sax and piano. Plenty of scuzz, but well performed and produced. A ready soundtrack for a Tarantino film! (MA) (4-song CD-R, lyrics not included, thewombombs.bandcamp.com)

WOOF – Fuzzed-out bratty hardcore from New Orleans. The D-beat drum intro teases you into a sludgy tortured mid-tempo attack. The songs unpredictably slow down and speed up to keep them from falling into any style trap, and what it lacks in hooks it makes up for in pure distorted, impudent rage. Featured lyrics from "Thirsty": *"Anybody anybody anybody anybody, this bitch needs a drink!"* (MA) (7-song cassette, lyrics included, woofno.bandcamp.com)

ZINES

Send zines for review to PO Box 3852, Oakland, CA 94609 USA. Include postpaid price within the US and internationally. We are always looking for multi-lingual zine reviewers who are based in the US. Write to zines@maximumrocknroll.com for information.

(DZ) Ryan Modee
(GM) Gina Murrell
(JA) Joshua Kay
(JD) Joan DeToro

CHASING THE NIGHT #5
$4 / 78 pgs
If you've been paying attention, you already know what to expect from this zine. In my opinion, a perfect lifer punk zine. Personal stuff without focusing on being personal; pissed political pages, and although you'll find many a mention of punk, it's most certainly not about the music. I think of the term "ifer" a lot when I read this, and maybe that's not what the author and contributors wanted to convey, but it's a theme that seems to run rampant. Segments on caring for an aging parent, several contributor's book reviews, an explanation behind one of Dead Moon's greatest scream-alongs that is going to bum you out, Portland diner reviews, cancer reviews, and how to behave like a decent fucking human at a restaurant, and, obviously, so much more. Absolutely essential, even though, unfortunately, I can no longer read Erica Lyle's handwriting, no matter which strength of eyeglasses I reach for, and would like to propose that she get a typewriter. Get this. (DZ)
Erin Yanke, PO Box 1113, Portland, OR 97207 / pobox1113portlandor97207@gmail.com

CLOCK TOWER NINE #14
$3 / 36 pgs
A comp zine dedicated to analog technology – with tangents on online gaming and organized
religion. This issue is seemingly for those who spend hours in record stores, send and receive postcards, and stay up until 4 AM ruminating with friends on the origins of classic animated characters and '80s video games. Danny Noonan, who works at Spin Cycle Records in Seattle, rounded up eight of his friends, who wrote about the birth of *Ms. Pac-Man*, the backstory of Simba from *The Lion King*, and more. The strongest contribution is "8-Track Reviews," in which Steven Isaac River talks about buying and repairing 8-track tapes, purchasing 8-track players, and then offers reviews on 8-tracks—all interesting enough to be its own zine. This zine is worth picking up for this essay alone. (GM)
www.antiquatedfuture.com

DUSTY DIGEST #1
Free / 1 pg
Sweet, semi-rambling little one-pager from Minneapolis, written by an allegedly shy former *MRR* record reviewer, and present-day museum worker. The paragraphs switch from rambling to reviews in a cohesive manner. There is a short list of books the author approves of, along with a strange fascination with youth crew/liberal arts college combinations. This might be a necessity for a handful of MPLS locals, but it didn't necessarily leave me feeling too out of the loop out here in SF. Kinda weird, but definitely worth a check out. (DZ)
dustydigest@gmail.com

FINDING A BOTTOM: A QUEER ADDICTION & RECOVERY ZINE #1 / 44 pgs
Anthology created by queer addicts that contains a bit of everything: fiction, interviews, poetry, art, you name it. Nakedly honest about their lives, most pieces paint a portrait of bottoming out and/or fighting for survival. My favorite pieces were by Johnathan, who describes his descent from being a married parent with a child to being homeless with his husband to hitting rock bottom and then back into some sort of stability again; and by Kitty Stryker, who flatly describes their drug use and doesn't try to moralize for or against it, instead insisting on the pleasures they have had while using in moderation. There's a lot of variety in tone here, but most of the pieces are worth the read. (JD)
pixeljizz510@gmail.com

FLUKE #16
$3 / 32 pgs
Issue #16 of *Fluke* ("a punk fanzine originally from Little Rock, AR") is dedicated solely to NXOEED. NXOEED is the alias of artist James B. Hunt, whom the creator of *Fluke* met a few years ago at a copy shop. Peeking over to see what he was up to, Matthew Thompson of *Fluke* was immediately taken with Hunt's artwork. The black-and-white pages of *Fluke* #16 are filled with Hunt's art, which has appeared on paintings, posters, and flyers around Arizona. In a four-page interview within this same issue of *Fluke*, Hunt says, "I can remember being five years old and knowing I was going to be an artist. There was never any question." From what's printed in the pages of *Fluke*, there's no question that NXOEED is a unique talent. (GM)
fluke.bigcartel.com

GA MUTT #3
28 pgs
Rad, super sloppy, and pretty wild. An email argument with Dave Grohl (which absolutely can not be Dave Grohl), a goofy as fuck Greg Ginn quote (which might be Greg Ginn) on nearly every page, record reviews, a completely incomprehensive mini-font page about gawd knows what, and even an ode to Screaming Females, all in a killer '80s cut 'n' paste style. Totally worth your time. (DZ)
John Tappen, 12 Pinecrest Rd, New Paltz, NY 12561

ICH WILL NIX ÄLTER WERDEN #1
$5 / 28 pgs
Named after a German punk song, *Ich Will Nix Älter Werden* (translation: "I Don't Wanna Get Older") is a zine about a queer love affair during the time of the Berlin Wall. The zine is comprised of letters written by Anni, who lives in West Berlin, to her girlfriend Micki, who lives in East Berlin. After a failed attempt to see Micki, Anni begins to write the letters "so that you will not worry. Who knows how long until I can visit you again. Hopefully soon." Interspersed throughout

the black-and-white zine are Xeroxed photographs of the girls, of identification cards, of mixtapes, and of everyday life in a divided late 1970s Berlin. *Ich Will Nix Älter Werden* zine is an epistolary love story "dedicated to the memory of" those separated by borders. (GM)
a.charamoy@gmail.com

NIX COMICS QUARTERLY #10
32 pgs / $5
Brief comic collection that mostly features the writing of Nix comics owner Ken Eppstein with artwork from a variety of artists. Most of the comics here have a slight horror theme, although nothing terribly spooky or scary happens. The writing here tends to feel a bit on the corny side, where everything has an unfunny joke or an unoriginal story arc. The art succeeds a lot more: every artist here has a different style, from the almost '70s feel of Michael Neno to the more modern feeling Gideon Kendall. Not a bad way to spend five bucks if you've got a goofy sense of humor, but if not just stick to another indie comic release. (JD)
ken@nixcomics.com / Nixcomics.com

NO OTRO LADO #1
$4 / 20 pgs
In November 2018, the Philadelphia-based DJ, author, activist, and educator Marissa Johnson-Valenzuela released the album *No Otro Lado*. The album—the title of which translates to "No Other Side"—reflects on Mexican and Latinx liberation, especially in terms of lives lived within the United States. The zine of the same title is a supplement to the album. *No Otro Lado* zine consists of liner notes, lyrics, and other information—in Spanish and in English—related to the concept of the album. Printed in black and white, the zine has on its inside cover a download code for the digital version of the album. On the back is a "Birth Certificate Lottery Ticket" with scratch-off detail. *No Otro Lado* zine is included in all vinyl versions of the album. (GM)
nootrolado.bandcamp.com

NOT LIKE YOU: PHOTO ISSUE #2
$4/40 Pgs
Full sized photozine with color cover and guts. Mixing up between full page, half page and multiple shot spreads. Looks okay overall, layout is clean and boring (kinda whatevs desktop publishing vibe). Some skate photos. I'm tempted to bag on this hard but really there's no point, it's not for me and isn't making any argument for anything other than "why not?" as a reason to exist. I think it's arguable whether we need more photos of punk bands playing and the 90% reunion circuit content present here isn't bending my ear. In case you're interested the bands featured include: the Faction, Youth of Today, Judge, Fury, McRad, Cro-Mags, JFA, Dag Nasty, Night Birds, Negative Approach, Burn and Madball. (JA)
102 Richmond Dr SE, Alburquerque, NM 87106 /
notlikeyourecords.com

STOP ALL WARS #1
$5 (free PDF version available) / 40 pgs
Full sized, full color throughout on thick glossy paper. Some personal reflections that seem cynical, reactionary to me but most people would probably just read as a frustrated musings by a real ass dude (i.e. nothing bad or shitty but not very thoughtful or self-aware either). The main thrust of this project is international hc punk. Interviews with DHK (Peru), Armoured Flu Unit (UK), Violencia (Mexico), Wolfbrigade (Sweden) and The Feederz (US). It's explicitly nonprofit, covers the bands they are interested in and tries to push up against regular boring band bio questions by asking about politics to good effect at times. Nothing to write home about but overcoming language barriers to pass on info about punks from around the globe is not to be sneezed at either. (JA)
14419 Greenwood Ave N, Ste A #108, Seattle, WA 98133-6865 /
jasonessig67@gmail.com

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9 3/5 - RICHMOND - VA
10 3/6 - CLAYTON - NC
11 3/7 - GREENSBORO - NC
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13 3/9 - ACWORTH - GA
14 3/9 - DULUTH - GA
15 3/10 - SANFORD - FL
16 3/10 - JACKSONVILLE - FL
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18 3/12 - MELBOURNE - FL
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20 3/15 - WEST PALM BEACH - FL
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22 3/16 - FT LAUDERDALE - FL
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35 3/29 - ALBUQUERQUE - NM
36 3/30 - EL PASO - TX
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38 3/31 - TEMPE - AZ
39 4/1 - YUMA - AZ
40 4/2 - TARZANA - CA
41 4/3 - BAKERSFIELD - CA
42 4/4 - POMONA - CA
43 4/5 - SAN DIEGO - CA
44 4/6 - VEGAS - NV
45 4/7 - FLAGSTAFF - AZ
46 4/9 - OKC - OK
47 4/10 - TULSA - OK
48 4/11 - FAYETTEVILLE - AR
49 4/12 - LITTLE ROCK - AR
50 4/13 - MEMPHIS - TN
51 4/14 - NASHVILLE - TN
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